CASEL Guide for Schoolwide Social and Emotional Learning

Establish a Shared Vision

Use Data for Continuous Improvement

Integrate SEL Schoolwide

Assess Resources and Needs

Provide Professional Learning

Adopt Evidence-Based Programs

Schoolwide SEL

CDI Version – November 2014
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Foreword

Since its founding in 1994, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has focused on establishing social and emotional learning as an essential part of education. We believe that schools, families, and communities should work together to support the healthy social and emotional development of all students and promote their success in school and life. Given our core belief, CASEL works to (1) advance the science of social and emotional learning (SEL), (2) expand integrated, evidence-based SEL practice, and (3) strengthen the field and impact of social and emotional learning.

In 2003 CASEL published Safe and Sound: An Educational Leader’s Guide to Evidence-Based Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Programs. This was a “consumer’s guide” to 80 currently available SEL programs, with descriptions and quality ratings for each. Soon after we published Safe and Sound we began to hear from school administrators and teachers wanting to know how to ensure high-quality SEL implementation and long-term success and sustainability. Our response was the creation of Sustainable Schoolwide Social and Emotional Learning: Implementation Guide and Toolkit in 2006. The primary purpose of the Implementation Guide and Toolkit was to help school leaders and their planning teams implement high-quality, sustainable SEL programming integrated into every aspect of a school’s functions. The guide answered some of the questions CASEL received most often from educators, such as: How do we get started with SEL? How do we do SEL when there are so many other things on our plate? How do we implement SEL in a high-quality way?

The response to CASEL’s Implementation Guide and Toolkit was very positive. Yet the SEL field has grown significantly in the eight years since we released that guide, and we have witnessed an increase in the need and demand for SEL at all levels. As a result, we created this second edition of the toolkit, which we call the CASEL Guide for Schoolwide Social and Emotional Learning. The purpose and intent are the same as with the original guide—to help school leaders and staff implement high-quality, sustainable SEL programming integrated into every function of the school. However, the content has changed substantially based on advances in the field of SEL.

An important influence in the development of this Guide is CASEL’s work with school districts through its Collaborating Districts Initiative (CDI), which supports eight large school districts in building capacity for high-quality, evidence-based SEL programming in preschool through twelfth grade. Central to the CDI is a Theory of Action based on the premise that district leaders can create systemic changes that will support schools and classrooms in ways that positively influence students’ social-emotional development and academic performance. In this Guide we are focused on school-level systemic SEL implementation strategies with particular attention to the critical role of the school’s SEL Leadership Team.

We have organized the Guide around the key activities of CASEL’s School Theory of Action:

1. Establish a shared vision to lead SEL
2. Assess resources and needs for schoolwide SEL
3. Provide ongoing and embedded professional learning
4. Adopt evidence-based SEL programs schoolwide
5. Integrate SEL into the core functioning of the school
6. Use data to inform a cycle of inquiry to improve SEL practice and student outcomes
In addition to this framework, we have updated the tools we developed for the previous version of this *Guide* and added new ones that incorporate research-based practices to make them more relevant for the practitioners who will use them.

CASEL is a learning organization with a collaborative action-research approach to establishing practical evidence-based programming to enhance students’ academic, social, and emotional learning. We initially field-tested the chapters and tools in this *Guide* in two elementary K-8 schools and two high schools in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) over a five-month period. The *Guide* was also used by three additional elementary K-8 schools and two high schools in Chicago, as well as six elementary, middle, and high schools in the Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD). Staff and principals from the schools participating in the initial field test provided invaluable feedback on the language, content, and usefulness of this *Guide*, and that feedback led to many improvements. CASEL’s District Consultants and representatives from CASEL’s eight Collaborating Districts provided practical input and recommendations. In addition to CPS and SCUSD, the Collaborating Districts are Anchorage School District, Austin Independent School District, Cleveland Metropolitan School District, Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, Oakland Unified School District, and Washoe County (Nev.) School District.

CASEL is also using this *Guide* in a collaboration with CPS, Penn State University, and the American Institutes for Research. The collaboration is funded through the U.S. Department of Education’s Investing in Innovation (i3) grant program. The *Guide*’s role in this project is to help leadership teams implement SEL across their school community in order to promote student social and emotional growth and academic performance. Implemented in 14 CPS schools, this is an ambitious application and study of schoolwide SEL. We expect to learn valuable lessons about effectively using and improving this *Guide* through this exciting collaboration.

We hope this version of the *Guide* will help school staff implement SEL even more successfully than we envisioned when we created the original implementation guide and toolkit in 2006. We look forward to hearing how you and your colleagues are using the *Guide* and how it is helping you achieve your schoolwide SEL goals. Feedback from the colleagues who field test this *Guide* will lead to updates and improvements for future editions that we hope will be used by schools across the country.

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- Al Raby High School
- Esmond Elementary School
- Social Justice High School
- Wacker Elementary School

These additional Chicago public schools also used this Guide and provided feedback:

- Austin Business & Entrepreneurship Academy High School
- Bennett Elementary School
- Farragut Career Academy High School
- Kohn Elementary School
- Langston Hughes Elementary School

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- California Middle School
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References


Introduction and Overview of Schoolwide SEL Planning and Implementation

“Our goal is to begin building a movement dedicated to creating knowledgeable, responsible, and caring children and communities—where children have the knowledge they need to be successful, the compassion and values they need to care about others, and the skills they need to be responsible citizens.”

—Timothy P. Shriver, CASEL Board Chair (CASEL Forum, December 2007)

Chapter Topics

- What Do We Want for Our Young People’s Education?
- What are the Key Social and Emotional Competencies?
- What is Schoolwide SEL?
- What are the Benefits of Schoolwide SEL?
- What is the Organizing Theory of Action for Schoolwide SEL?
- How is the Guide Organized?

Core Tool

- Schoolwide Planning and Implementation Rubric

What Do We Want for Our Young People’s Education?

Simply stated, the purpose of education is to equip students with the skills and knowledge they need to become effective and contributing members of their communities – now and in the future. To achieve this, schools are challenged to balance an emphasis on the traditional “three Rs” and academic content with support for life skills such as self-knowledge, the ability to recognize and manage emotions, relationship building, effective teamwork, and decision-making. The CASEL Guide for Schoolwide Social and Emotional Learning is designed to provide schools with guidance and tools that support a fully integrated, schoolwide approach to developing academic, social, and emotional competencies.

An increasing number of educational organizations and movements (including, for example, ASCD’s Whole Child Initiative, Head Start, the School Readiness movement, the National Research Council, 21st Century Learning, College and Career Readiness, and the National School Boards Association) now recognize the importance of a fully integrated approach to developing intellectual, social, emotional, and ethical skills.

This approach is increasingly referred to as social and emotional learning, or SEL. Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children, adolescents, and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.
A recent national survey of teachers in preschool through high school conducted by Civic Enterprises found that educators consider social and emotional competencies critically important to their students’ success in school, work, and life. Teachers viewed social and emotional skills as teachable and supported making social and emotional learning a priority for curriculum and instruction. The survey revealed that teachers also believed social and emotional development should be reflected in learning standards.

A growing body of research supports the premise that social and emotional skills, knowledge, and attitudes are critical both to academic learning and to the competencies students will need to be successful in the 21st century. Most notably, a meta-analysis of 213 evaluation studies of school-based SEL programs demonstrated that students receiving high-quality SEL programming scored an average of 11 percentile points higher on standardized tests compared to students who did not receive SEL programming. Students who received high-quality SEL programming also showed improved commitment to school, engaged in less classroom disruption and delinquent behavior, and experienced less depression and anxiety. Other research has shown similarly compelling results.

This Guide provides guidance and tools to help schools achieve these types of outcomes through a schoolwide approach to SEL. Schoolwide SEL fully integrates academic, social, and emotional learning designed to reach everyone in the school so that:

- **Students** are actively engaged in academic, social, and emotional learning. They show caring and concern for, and contribute to, the well-being of others. They exhibit higher-order thinking, innovation, creativity, and the ability to collaborate on common learning goals, all while making strong academic gains.

- **Teachers and other school staff members** are consistently caring toward and set high expectations for students. They use teaching strategies that are student-centered, inquiry-based, and interactive, and they encourage students to be reflective and collaborative. Teachers work cooperatively to create an inclusive and supportive school community.

- **School administrators** nurture a culture and climate of trust, collaboration, and communication. They share a mission that combines a balance of academic, social, and emotional learning and serves as the organizing foundation for the school. As school leaders they foster positive relationships with students, staff, and the broader community.

- **Parents and families** feel welcomed, included, and actively engaged as partners in their children’s learning.

The CASEL School Guide reflects this comprehensive vision for education and offers a process for planning, implementing, and monitoring schoolwide SEL and embedding it into the core functioning of a school.
What are the Key Social and Emotional Competencies?

Research has identified five interrelated clusters of social and emotional competencies:

- **Self-awareness** refers to the ability to recognize one’s own feelings and thoughts and how they influence one’s behaviors. This includes accurately assessing personal strengths (as well as one’s challenges or limitations), setting realistic goals, and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism.

- **Self-management** is the ability to regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations. This includes skills and strategies for delaying gratification, managing stress, controlling impulses, motivating oneself, and achieving personal and academic goals.

- **Social awareness** is the ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. Social awareness also includes understanding social and ethical norms for behavior and recognizing family, school, and community resources and supports.

- **Relationship skills** refers to the ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships, including those with diverse individuals and groups. Relationship skills include knowing how to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist negative social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and effectively seek help when needed.

- **Responsible decision-making** is the ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions, including about school and life expectations, based on a consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, and realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions. Responsible decisions reflect concern for one’s well-being as well as the well-being of others.

These five competency clusters are interrelated and often operate simultaneously. As Figure 1 illustrates, two of the clusters (in dark orange) focus on skills related to the self, two (in blue) focus on skills related to others, and the third (in green) focuses on decision-making.

The ability of adults to enhance these competencies is critically important for student success. Research has shown that teachers and school staff are more effective at fostering and supporting student SEL when they themselves are socially and emotionally competent. Principals and school administrators set the tone for SEL by the way they conduct themselves and treat staff, students, families, and community members. School leaders with strong social-emotional competencies also set an important example as they build and maintain positive and trusting relationships among members of the school community.
Figure 1. Social and Emotional Learning Core Competencies

- **Self-management**: Managing emotions and behaviors to achieve one's goals.
- **Self-awareness**: Recognizing one's emotions and values as well as one's strengths and limitations.
- **Social awareness**: Showing understanding and empathy for others.
- **Responsible decision-making**: Making ethical, constructive choices about personal and social behavior.
- **Relationship skills**: Forming positive relationships, working in teams, dealing effectively with conflict.
FIVE SEL COMPETENCIES

Self-Awareness
- Labeling one’s feelings accurately
- Recognizing the connection between feelings, thoughts, and behavior
- Accurately assessing one’s strengths and limitations
- Setting realistic goals
- Having a well-grounded sense of self-efficacy and optimism
- Having a positive mindset

Self-Management
- Regulating one’s emotions
- Managing stress
- Controlling one’s impulses
- Motivating oneself
- Working toward and achieving goals

Social Awareness
- Perspective taking
- Empathy
- Respecting diversity
- Understanding social and ethical norms of behavior
- Recognizing family, school, and community supports

Relationship Skills
- Building healthy relationships, including those with diverse individuals and groups
- Communicating clearly
- Working cooperatively
- Resisting negative social pressure
- Resolving conflicts
- Seeking help when needed

Responsible Decision-Making
- Making constructive, safe choices about self, relationships, and school
- Considering the well-being of self and others
- Recognizing one’s responsibility to behave ethically
- Basing decisions on safety, social, and ethical considerations
- Evaluating realistic consequences of various actions

2014 Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
What is Schoolwide SEL?

Schoolwide SEL is the process of fostering the social-emotional development and academic performance of all students within a school. It requires comprehensive and coordinated strategies at all levels.

This Guide and its tools are designed to support school leadership teams in ongoing implementation of schoolwide SEL. The activities described in the Guide are part of an ongoing process of continuous improvement that may take from three to five years.

Where schoolwide SEL takes place

As shown in Figure 2, there are three setting levels within a school where adult and student SEL can take place. The first is the classroom. In most schools preschool and elementary students are assigned to one teacher and classroom where they spend the majority of their time. In secondary grades, students spend time each day in several different classrooms. Often they are also assigned to a homeroom or advisory.

The second level is the school building. Schools contain multiple classrooms or homerooms. They usually have other settings such as the library, cafeteria, and auditorium. As with classrooms, schools are not just physical structures. Each school has a unique personality that is often referred to as the school’s climate or culture. This grows out of interactions that take place among and between adults, students, families, and community members. It is also influenced by school-level policies and practices.

Schools do not function in a vacuum. The third level, family and community, is important because student success depends to a great extent on the quality of the relationships and experiences young people have at home and in their neighborhoods. Schools also develop relationships with families and community members that provide opportunities for them to be involved in the educational process.
What schoolwide SEL looks like

There are many different ways to promote students’ social and emotional development at each level. At the classroom level the use of a curriculum or specific instructional practices is a common strategy. At the building level, the strategies typically involve changing practices or policies so they can influence student social and emotional development. At the family and community level, the primary strategy for fostering student social and emotional development is through partnerships that extend SEL into students’ homes and the broader community.

**Classroom level.** Classroom SEL typically involves teaching and modeling social and emotional skills, providing opportunities for students to practice those skills, and giving them an opportunity to demonstrate mastery. In preschool and elementary classrooms, one of the most prevalent approaches is for teachers to conduct lessons that teach social and emotional skills and then encourage students to use those skills throughout the day. Another approach is to embed SEL instruction into content areas such as English language arts, social studies, or math.

Although explicit SEL lessons are one important option, teachers can also foster SEL skills through their interactions with students. This includes encouraging positive student-teacher relationships, modeling social-emotional competencies, and promoting student engagement by providing opportunities for
student voice, autonomy, and skill mastery. This approach to promoting SEL is indirect. It focuses on adult practices that improve classroom quality and promote student skill development.

Another classroom approach is to create structures that increase the likelihood of positive and supportive interactions—among adults, among students, and among both groups. Examples include regularly scheduled advisories or class meetings that provide students with the opportunity to connect with each other and build a sense of community. This is especially important in secondary grades, where students move between classes more frequently than in elementary school.

Both advisories and class meetings lend themselves to SEL instruction and embedding skill building into students’ daily routines. Several evidence-based programs at the secondary level provide guidance for conducting advisories in ways that are engaging, interactive, and allow students to reflect on what they are learning together.

Learning standards can also be used to guide SEL curriculum and instruction. They define what students need to know and be able to do at every grade level. Many states are beginning to embed social and behavioral competencies into learning standards such as the Common Core State Standards. Some are developing free-standing SEL standards. Teachers can use these standards to develop lesson plans that are aligned with and incorporate SEL.

**Building level.** At the building level SEL strategies are typically policies or practices related to school climate, student support services, or afterschool programming. A safe and positive school climate is recognized as an important factor for improving academic, behavioral, and mental health outcomes for students. A sense of trust among students, families, and school staff is one dimension of climate that is particularly important for promoting adult and student SEL.

Principals and school leaders can organize building-level strategies that build positive relationships and a sense of community. They can also establish procedures within the school—such as the way that staff meetings are conducted—to help support staff SEL. Feeling socially, emotionally, and physically safe is another important climate characteristic that supports social and emotional development. Schoolwide practices and policies that promote this type of school environment include establishing a building climate team or developing clear norms, values, and expectations for students and staff.

Discipline policies and bullying prevention practices can also provide opportunities for SEL at the building level. When aligned with SEL, practices and policies can provide opportunities for students to resolve conflicts and repair damaged relationships. This helps foster relationship skills and responsible decision making, as opposed to policies and practices that only allow for behavioral interventions such as external rewards or punishments.

The support services provided by professionals such as school counselors, social workers, and school psychologists are also critical. Often through small-group work, student support professionals reinforce and supplement classroom-based SEL instruction for students who need a higher level of support. When these individuals know the social and emotional content and instructional practices teachers are using in classrooms, they can align them with their own work with students.

After-school activities can also provide students with opportunities to develop SEL skills, knowledge, and attitudes. They can also help connect students with supportive adults and peers. Research has shown that after-school programs that devote time to student social and emotional development can
significantly increase student self-perceptions, bonding to school, positive social behaviors, school grades, and achievement test scores while reducing problem behaviors.\(^5\)

**Family and community level.** Families help support SEL by creating opportunities for learning at home and reinforcing the skill development taking place at school. Research suggests that evidence-based SEL programs are more effective when they extend into the home.\(^7,8\)

Community partners and organizations also help extend the reach of SEL by supporting and sustaining classroom and school efforts and by providing students with additional opportunities for SEL. Such partnerships may include community-based organizations, health care providers, governmental agencies, and other community institutions.\(^9\)

Ideally the strategies a school chooses to adopt at each setting level are coordinated and integrated with one another so that efforts are not repetitive or fragmented. Chapter 5 of this *Guide* presents ways to accomplish this and integrate SEL into the core functioning of the school.

**What are the Benefits of Schoolwide SEL?**

Social and emotional competencies, skills, and dispositions are keys to success in school, career, and life. SEL ensures that students will have the broad skills and competencies needed to commit to learning and to successfully engage with rigorous academic content. In the future workplace, SEL ensures young people will have the ability to work well with others, communicate, respect diversity, solve problems, and behave professionally.

Fully integrating SEL with academics and across all systems in preschool through high school provides opportunities for:

- Establishing a powerful, relationship-centered approach to education.
- Putting the social and emotional development of young people at the heart of every classroom and school.
- Linking and integrating academic, social, and emotional learning in meaningful ways that support the full spectrum of students’ development.
- Enhancing student learning by increasing students’:
  - Motivation to achieve.
  - Ability to be attentive and engaged in the learning process.
  - Satisfaction with learning.
  - Sense of belonging.
- Fostering the development of essential life skills.

**What is the Organizing Theory of Action for Schoolwide SEL?**

This *Guide* recognizes that schools are already doing many things that support SEL. The purpose of the *Guide* is to offer a coordinated and systematic approach based on an organizing Theory of Action (ToA). The CASEL School ToA (Figure 3) describes the *inputs* needed as well as *key activities* aimed at achieving desired *outcomes*. 
Although many district decisions are likely to be beyond the school’s control, ideally the district is committed to SEL. District inputs include cultivating organizational support for SEL, assessing district-level resources and needs, helping to support SEL throughout the school community, and establishing systems for continually improving SEL.

Central activities to promote and integrate high-quality SEL, according to the ToA, are (1) creating a common vision, (2) assessing needs and resources, (3) implementing professional development, (4) adopting and implementing evidence-based programming, (5) integrating SEL throughout the school, and (6) developing and implementing strategies for continuous improvement. The outcomes of schoolwide SEL are all strongly influenced by practices and capacities that support high-quality SEL implementation. They are likely to leverage further change in schools and classrooms, which in turn can lead to positive social, emotional, and academic gains for all students.

CASEL is currently collaborating with school districts to align central office and school-level SEL planning. We urge district and school leaders to familiarize themselves with the contents of the CASEL District Resource Guide and this School Guide to establish policies and practices that have the greatest potential impact.
Through collaboration, families, community members, central office leaders, and school leadership teams can create schoolwide changes that will support SEL development for all students.

**District Inputs:**
- Cultivate commitment and organizational support for SEL
- Assess SEL resources and needs
- Support classroom, schoolwide and community SEL programming
- Establish systems for continuous improvement

**Key Schoolwide Activities:**
- Establish a shared SEL vision with all stakeholders
- Assess SEL-related resources and needs
- Provide ongoing and embedded SEL professional learning
- Adopt evidenced-based SEL programs and programming
- Integrate SEL with student-centered instruction, curriculum, standards, and everyday practices
- Conduct cycles of inquiry for continuous improvement

**Schoolwide Outcomes:**
- Schoolwide commitment to a shared SEL vision
- Implementation plan guided by results of an SEL school resources and needs assessment
- Highly skilled and capable staff who support SEL implementation
- Implementation of evidenced-based SEL programs and practices
- Coordinated family and community partnerships
- Data-informed SEL practices and documented impact
- Positive school climate
- Improved academic performance and social-emotional competence of all students.

**Context and Conditions – Families, Community, District, State, Federal Impacts**
**How is the *Guide* Organized?**

This *Guide* is designed to support each of the key activities involved in implementing high-quality SEL as identified in Figure 3. The *Guide* answers the following questions:

- How do we get started with SEL? How do we create buy-in and engage stakeholders in a shared vision for schoolwide SEL?
- What are we already doing to support SEL in our school? What more is needed so all of our students benefit?
- What professional learning is needed to build understanding of SEL and offer effective, engaging, and collaborative teaching that integrates SEL with instruction?
- How do we ensure we are doing an effective job of cultivating our students’ social and emotional competencies?
- What kind of SEL programming does our school need to ensure that all students receive high-quality SEL instruction?
- How do we create a school culture and climate that supports SEL?
- How do we integrate SEL into all aspects of school life?
- How can we promote a culture of continuous improvement that supports the vision for SEL?

Each chapter includes a narrative and tools focused on the six major activities in the School Theory of Action.

- **Chapter 1: Establish a Shared Vision of Schoolwide SEL** prepares school leadership teams to work collaboratively to establish a shared vision for SEL that emphasizes the full integration of social, emotional, and academic learning for all students.
- **Chapter 2: Assess Resources and Needs for Schoolwide SEL** offers tools for examining strengths and supports for SEL that already exist in a school. These tools also help schools establish goals and priorities essential to developing a long-term plan for schoolwide SEL.
- **Chapter 3: Provide Ongoing Professional Learning** describes high-quality professional learning for SEL and provides a variety of approaches, including how to build SEL awareness, enhance adult SEL skills, and cultivate effective SEL instructional practices.
- **Chapter 4: Adopt Evidence-Based SEL Programs** describes a systematic process for selecting evidence-based SEL programs that will effectively support social and emotional skill development in classrooms and throughout the school community.
- **Chapter 5: Integrate SEL into the Core Functioning of the School** clarifies how SEL relates to other key initiatives in the school or district, with the goal of integrating SEL into classrooms, throughout the school building, and with families and community agencies. This integration is central to promoting a positive school climate and culture.
- **Chapter 6: Use a Cycle of Inquiry to Improve SEL Practice and Student Outcomes** presents a process for ongoing monitoring of SEL implementation and expected outcomes.

Each chapter contains tools to help school leaders learn about, plan for, and implement schoolwide SEL.

The first essential tool is the [Schoolwide Planning and Implementation Rubric](#). The rubric helps schools assess where they are and what infrastructure is in place to support schoolwide SEL on each of the six key activities in Figure 3. CASEL created the rubric to guide and support schools in establishing a
process for implementing and monitoring high-quality SEL. It provides a foundation for all of the work in the chapters that follow.

The Schoolwide Planning and Implementation Rubric is designed to support school leadership teams in implementing the six key activities associated with the School Theory of Action. For each of the six activities, the rubric provides indicators that include four levels from “little or no development” to “fully functional level of development and implementation.” The rubric can serve a number of purposes. It can be used to (a) assess how receptive a school is to a schoolwide approach to SEL, (b) provide a baseline for a school’s current SEL activities and approaches, (c) provide a framework for planning effective SEL implementation, and (d) reflect on progress. School leaders may use the rubric at the beginning and throughout each school year to monitor progress, celebrate accomplishments, and set new priorities.

This Guide and its tools are all designed to guide and support school leadership teams in ongoing implementation of SEL. The chapters present a process school teams can use to build systemic support for schoolwide SEL. The activities supported by the Guide are part of an ongoing process of continuous improvement that may take from three to five years.

This Guide recognizes that each school will have unique circumstances, strengths, concerns, and previous experiences with SEL. No two schools will use this Guide in exactly the same way. The Guide is based on the premise that a variety of approaches exist for achieving a broad vision for full integration of academic, social, and emotional learning. Each school will need to make adaptations to address its unique context and needs and to make the process authentically its own.
References


Chapter 1 - Establishing a Shared Vision of Schoolwide SEL

In my experience, effective change leaders—or any people who are successful in any walk of life—don’t start with imagining the future. They walk into the future through examining their own and others’ best practices, looking for insights they had hitherto not noticed.

— Michael Fullan, Change Leader: Learning to Do What Matters Most? (p. 11)

Chapter Topics

- Who Leads Schoolwide SEL?
- How Do Schools Develop a Shared Vision of Schoolwide SEL?
- How Can a Cycle of Inquiry Support the Development of an SEL Vision and Goals?

Tools

1.1: Selecting and Establishing an SEL Leadership Team
1.2: Developing a Schoolwide Implementation Plan
1.3: Planning for SEL Leadership Team Meetings
1.4: Developing a Shared Vision to Guide SEL Development
1.5: Personal Assessment and Reflection—SEL Competencies for School Leaders, Staff, and Adults
1.6: Developing Talking Points for Communicating the “Big Idea” of SEL
1.7: “Becoming an SEL School” Presentation

Why Is It Important to Establish a Shared Vision of Schoolwide SEL?

The purpose of this chapter is to suggest a structure and process that schools can use to develop their approach to schoolwide SEL. Schoolwide SEL has the potential to create profound change within a school and provide students with experiences that foster the intellectual, social, emotional, and ethical skills necessary to be successful in school and life. As reflected in the Schoolwide Planning and Implementation Rubric, this educational approach is most effective when all major stakeholders from the school community help to define what this means for their students and develop a vision for how to achieve this based on their own priorities. The majority of the members of the school community should be aware of this vision, and the leaders of the school should model the attitudes and behaviors they hope to see in staff and students.

Who Leads Schoolwide SEL?

Research on successful whole-school change and improvement has identified engagement and active support from the school leader as the single biggest predictor of whether or not change takes hold and yields benefits to students. For example, staff perceptions of a supportive leader are associated with student attendance, positive behavior, academic achievement, and overall school climate. This type of perceived support can also lead to teachers having stronger levels of commitment to their profession and to their school.

Effective leaders understand that positive changes are more likely to occur when there is a strong team working alongside them. It is crucial to identify and engage a core group of stakeholders early on to form
a team that leads schoolwide SEL in tandem with the principal. We call this core group the SEL Leadership team—or, for the sake of simplicity, the SEL team.

**Forming an SEL leadership team**

The purpose of the SEL team is to coordinate a school’s SEL efforts. The team informs, prepares, and supports others who help implement schoolwide SEL. Since the SEL team takes the lead in planning the approach to SEL, supporting schoolwide implementation, and monitoring progress along the way, it is helpful for members to be highly knowledgeable about the school, its context, and how it functions.

The team’s membership may include school-level personnel such as administrators, teachers, and student support staff. Keep in mind members of the team will need to have dedicated time to complete tasks related to SEL planning, implementation, monitoring, and providing support to others.

The structure of the SEL team may vary from one school to another. A critical choice in the process is whether to create a new team or assign the responsibilities for SEL to an existing group. For example, a committee focusing on school climate, school improvement, or curriculum could also take on the role of leading schoolwide SEL.

A new team can serve as a dedicated advocacy group for SEL. Yet linking with an existing group can ensure that academics and SEL will be closely integrated from the start. For smaller schools, there may not be enough available staff members to form a new team.

Another possibility is for schools to establish a steering committee that serves as a governing body overseeing and offering guidance to the SEL team. Such a committee might have decision-making authority and could be made up of school leaders and stakeholders from the broader community like families and local advocates. If the choice is to have a steering committee, the SEL team might be a smaller, task-oriented group that carries out the actual day-to-day work.

Whatever form the team takes, we recommend that the principal and one other influential member of the staff serve as co-chairs and guide the process. In effective schools, principals “lead from the center rather than the top” and are responsible for the learning of their colleagues. One of the most effective ways a principal can “lead from the center” is to cultivate staff ownership by modeling collaboration and sharing of both authority and leadership responsibilities with a colleague who is respected by the majority of the staff.

Effective leaders help to:

- Set reasonable expectations.
- Coordinate potentially competing initiatives.
- Make sure that communication is clear and action plans are realistic.

**Identifying and engaging potential team members**

When identifying potential members for the SEL team, think about the people in the school community who would either be most involved in or affected by schoolwide SEL. Aim to recruit participants who represent specific stakeholders but who also demonstrate strong social skills, will maintain the group
norms, and are motivated. These individuals may include classroom teachers, special services staff, support staff, students, parents and family members, and other influential members of the larger school community.

Leadership expert Linda Lambert writes, “Principals, teachers, parents, and students are the key players in the work of schooling. When working together, they form a concentration of leadership that is a powerful force in a school. If led by a skillful principal, teachers will often band together to form a team of professionals that invites parents and students into the work of leadership” (p. 6).6

Involving a variety of people who will be affected by SEL early in the process will contribute significantly to support for schoolwide SEL. It will help to build a sense of common interests and goals within the school community, which in turn will create common bonds as the work proceeds.7

**Tool 1.1: Selecting and Establishing an SEL Leadership Team** guides the principal and school leaders through the identification and selection of an SEL team that is committed, knowledgeable, and representative of the key stakeholders in the school community. The tool is divided into two parts and is designed to support the following processes: identifying members of the team and establishing roles and responsibilities.

Sometimes members of the school community have participated in an SEL approach in other schools. Family members may have been involved in developing SEL programs or may have observed them while helping as volunteers. Teachers may have taken part in SEL as part of their student teaching experience or as certified teachers. These teachers tend to continue to use SEL practices in their classrooms as part of their interactions with students and routine classroom management practices. “Cheerleaders” for SEL like these can become “champions” of the process.

The vignettes below describe how two schools in the Austin Independent School District selected and established representative SEL teams, using **Tool 1.1: Selecting and Establishing an SEL Leadership Team** to guide them, with highly successful results.

**Establishing an SEL Leadership Team: Part I**

At Bryker Woods School, the counselor – an SEL champion – formally became the school’s SEL facilitator. This role was designed by the SEL Department in the Austin Independent School District (AISD). Along with her principal and several staff members from her school, the counselor attended a professional learning session facilitated in AISD by CASEL. The session was designed to help participants develop a common understanding of SEL and how it can be implemented in schools.

The counselor used **Tool 1.1: Selecting and Establishing an SEL Leadership Team** as a framework for the activities that contribute to a successful launch of the team. The membership of the team included the counselor, the principal, and representative teachers from each grade level. The **Schoolwide Implementation Rubric** helped them establish a baseline of SEL activity in the school and guide the work going forward.

The school’s small size, along with long-term faculty retention, created a strong culture of collegiality among all staff members that helped to move the implementation planning forward at a rapid pace. The SEL team established a year-long schedule and met monthly for the first year of SEL implementation.
Meeting agendas were sent prior to the meetings and any pertinent discussion or decisions were noted on the working agenda and later disseminated as meeting notes to all members.

Establishing an SEL Leadership Team: Part II

At Casey Elementary School, also part of AISD, open communication, teacher leadership, and structured collaboration are highly valued. These values enable Casey to have a powerful, effective SEL team. It includes the principal, a counselor, a special education teacher, and six teachers from each grade level. Unique to Casey is a team meeting schedule that enables them to meet monthly during a designated time, which is calendared for the entire school year.

After attending a district SEL implementation training, the SEL team led a half-day “SEL Institute” for staff before the school year started. Through their goal-oriented meetings and shared leadership, the team has built schoolwide SEL ownership and engagement. They organized a peer SEL-walkthrough, focusing on “Peace Areas” across the school. The team also organizes a weekly “Tuesday SEL Assembly” with rotating presentations from all classrooms related to the lesson of the week from their evidence-based SEL program.

The Casey SEL team has led the staff and community in truly owning their unique approach to SEL. With shared leadership, strong principal support, structures that support collaboration, and a lot of hard work, Casey has a sustainable leadership process. Their success is evident in many ways. They even wrote their own song, “Crocodile Walk,” which guides students in calming down and practicing self-management. The Crocodile Walk was created by a team of administrators and teachers in the first year of SEL implementation as an activity to support SEL. This important curriculum connection activity was taught in P.E. and modeled at PTA events. It has been in practice for more than two years.

SEL leadership team meetings

Once the SEL team is established, the group can begin to guide the process of planning schoolwide SEL. We suggest that teams start by using **Tool 1.2: Developing a Schoolwide Implementation Plan**.

**Tool 1.2: Developing a Schoolwide Implementation Plan** is structured so that each of the six key activities in CASEL’s School Theory of Action can be planned for systematically. It helps the team list action steps for each of the six activities and identify how they will accomplish the action steps. It also includes sections that identify the individuals responsible for action, available resources, the projected cost, timeframes, and completion dates.

In order to execute the action steps in the schoolwide implementation plan, SEL teams should establish regular meetings (e.g., monthly) that last one to two hours. This will ensure the team has enough time to accomplish their work. At the first SEL team meeting members may want to discuss and agree upon a decision-making process and a communication strategy. As described in **Tool 1.3: Planning for SEL Leadership Team Meetings**, assigning the role of scribe to one of the team members can be an effective way to document meetings and distribute agendas and minutes.
**Tool 1.3: Planning for SEL Leadership Team Meetings** can be used once an SEL team is established. The tool is an informational handout with three parts. The first part presents an example of what the first team meeting might focus on. The second part includes an example of topics they could focus on during their first year of implementing schoolwide SEL. The third part provides reflection questions the team can discuss as they plan for the next phases of schoolwide SEL after the first year. Teams can choose which parts of the resource are most relevant to their needs.

The structure of SEL team meetings is flexible. One possibility is to start every meeting with a team-building exercise that helps connect the members of the team and create a sense of community. These exercises can be designed to illustrate a technique that promotes SEL or to involve reflection on a topic that will be the focus of the meeting.

It may also be useful to have members of the team provide a report at each meeting. For example, if the school is adopting an evidence-based SEL program, they might designate one teacher as a lead for that program to serve on the SEL team. At each meeting that person could provide an update on how the program is progressing.

Once the SEL team has used the **Schoolwide Implementation Rubric** and started to work on **Tool 1.2: Developing a Schoolwide Implementation Plan**, the team will have considerable flexibility in using this Guide and which tools it chooses to support the process.

Most schools begin working through the first two chapters, which focus on creating a vision for schoolwide SEL and conducting a resources and needs assessment. However, it is important to be familiar with the entire Guide in order to prioritize what is right for the school. Once the team is familiar with the contents of the Guide they can use **Tool 1.3: Planning for SEL Leadership Team Meetings** to develop agendas for SEL team meetings throughout the year.

**How Do Schools Develop a Shared Vision for SEL?**

In *The Learning Leader: How to Focus School Improvement for Better Results,* Douglas Reeves suggests that the first step in organizational change is to establish a compelling vision and clear standards of action that will accomplish the vision. A collaboratively developed SEL vision takes into account the school’s unique strengths and needs and incorporates the hopes and expectations of the entire school community related to schoolwide SEL.

In a shared visioning process, key questions include:

- What are our core values?
- What does success mean for our students?
- What qualities and skills do we hope all students possess upon leaving our school?
- What culture and climate do we want to build?

The vision can serve as a rallying call for the SEL effort and communicate the “Big Idea” — the hopes and dreams of what is desired for all students. Later in the process, specific goals and objectives can be developed. For now, think big. A shared SEL vision has the potential to serve as a continual guide and beacon.
The vignette below describes how Leataata Floyd Elementary School in the Sacramento City Unified School District engaged the school community in developing a shared schoolwide SEL vision.

**Vision for SEL**

At Sacramento’s Leataata Floyd Elementary School the SEL team created a collaborative vision for SEL by directly engaging staff members, students, families, and community members. At the time the school was undergoing a redesign after being designated a “Superintendent’s Priority School” based on decades of pervasive academic failure.

Because of this, from the viewpoint of the school’s leaders, a schoolwide focus on SEL was essential to building confidence in the school among students and families who had been historically disconnected from the benefits of public education and distrustful of schools in general.

Within the first week of the redesign, it became obvious that a traditional, adult-centered approach to school reform would not be sufficient to transform the school’s culture in a positive way. Therefore, the team took time during the first month to survey stakeholders, conduct focus groups, and compile and review both quantitative and qualitative data related to SEL.

The data gathered through this process made it clear that the students, families, and community wanted a school that balanced an emphasis on developing social-emotional skills and preparing students academically. As a result, the SEL leaders made it a priority for one of the school site’s instructional coaches to shift her purely academic role to one that focused on supporting social and emotional learning.

We suggest that the shared SEL vision be developed with input from the entire school community, as described above. Involving a range of stakeholders can foster widespread buy-in and support. **Tool 1.4: Developing a Shared Vision to Guide SEL Development** suggests an approach to this task. Using this tool, the SEL team can work collaboratively with major stakeholders to gather their input. The tool provides the rationale for why a shared vision is important, identifies the characteristics of an effective vision, and suggests steps for developing the vision. The tool also provides examples of shared visions that are integrated with SEL.

Once the shared SEL vision is developed, give it prominence and visibility in the school. Some practices include painting it on the entry hall wall or putting it on the school’s website, the letterhead, and the T-shirts for field day. Launch the idea in creative ways that will appeal to the school to create momentum for moving forward.

**Developing stakeholder awareness of SEL**

One important role for the SEL team is to help all members of the school community understand what SEL is. A useful way to do this is to use **Tool 1.5: Personal Assessment and Reflection - SEL Competencies for School Leaders, Staff, and Adults** to encourage individuals to reflect on their own SEL strengths and challenges.
Tool 1.5: Personal Assessment and Reflection - SEL Competencies for School Leaders, Staff, and Adults

is designed to help school staff assess and understand their own SEL competencies, including identifying areas of social and emotional competence in themselves that could be strengthened. The tool is intended primarily for personal self-reflection. If used as part of a professional learning experience, it can stimulate small-group discussion and reflection.

Planning communication about SEL

Communication about SEL is a top priority of the SEL team. By serving as champions for SEL, team members can inspire others to become engaged with and commit to schoolwide SEL. One way to motivate others is to develop “talking points.” Effective talking points often include four elements:

- Recognition of the participants’ issues or needs and acceptance of the frustrations and challenges they face.
- A sense of optimism – the belief that things can change if we all work together.
- Starting points – one or two examples of SEL-related practices observed in the school that are already working.
- An inspirational story or example of a time when a teacher made a difference or turned a student around as a result of using their SEL skills.

Tool 1.6: Developing Talking Points for Communicating the “Big Idea” of SEL

is intended to help the SEL team develop compelling statements to raise awareness about and create interest in SEL. The tool has examples of prompts that can be used to reflect on the school’s history, culture, and any current needs of students and staff that could be addressed to increase their ownership and buy-in. Talking points can be an effective conversation starter and energizer when championing SEL, and eventually they could be incorporated into a school’s communication plan for SEL.

When communicating with others about SEL, team members can model social and emotional skills by focusing on strengths and solutions. The talking points may also be used to develop a very brief “elevator speech” that communicates why SEL is important for high-quality education. It is also helpful to communicate that SEL is consistent with the school’s values. When communicating the idea of SEL is to encourage staff members to generate stories from their own experiences related to SEL.

Effective communication vehicles are important in educating, motivating, and inspiring school staff and community members about what SEL is and how it can benefit all students. In the early stage of schoolwide SEL, the SEL team can start to discuss structures that could promote information sharing with the staff. For example, they could use bulletins, share websites, and discuss schoolwide SEL during staff meetings. Consider sharing one of the following video clips:

http://www.edutopia.org/daniel-goleman-social-emotional-learning-video
http://www.edutopia.org/keys-social-emotional-learning-video

One example of a visual way to communicate the five SEL core competencies was developed by Wheaton Warren School District #200. As part of their approach to communication about SEL they developed a bookmark with the core competencies printed on one side and the accompanying skill sets printed on the other. Leataata Floyd Elementary School in the Sacramento City Unified School District
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created laminated cards listing the five SEL competencies that administrators and teachers wear on their lanyards to teach, model, and reinforce positive social and emotional skills with students.

Schools can also find useful communication examples such as videos and other materials on SEL at the website for the Austin Independent School District’s Department of Social and Emotional Learning: http://www.austinisd.org/academics/sel.

It is important for school personnel to understand what SEL is since all staff will help implement schoolwide SEL in some way. **Tool 1.7: Becoming an SEL School** contains slides that provide an overview of schoolwide SEL and this Guide’s process for implementing it across the school community.

**Tool 1.7: Becoming an SEL School** is a PowerPoint presentation developed by CASEL to be used by principals, SEL teams, and district personnel to introduce the “big ideas” of schoolwide SEL. It includes an introduction to the SEL five core competencies, the research that links SEL to academic achievement and positive student development, what SEL looks like in the classroom and across the school, and the six key activities highlighted in this Guide that build the infrastructure for sustainable schoolwide SEL. The PowerPoint can be customized by school and district leaders to include relevant information to meet the needs of a variety of audiences.

How Can a Cycle of Inquiry Support the Development of an SEL Vision and Goals?

The “Cycle of Inquiry” for schoolwide SEL is a reflection process for achieving successful outcomes using this Guide. As the name suggests, the cycle is guided by a series of questions (see Figure 4, below) that help to create goals and the actions needed to achieve these goals.

The first time an SEL team could use the cycle of inquiry might be through reflection about the school’s current capacity to support SEL. This could be guided by the **Schoolwide Planning and Implementation Rubric**. One way to go about this would be to examine the criteria for the highest score on the rubric across the six key activities. By reviewing the “Fully planned and implemented” performance level for each of the key activities the SEL team would be addressing the first question: “Where would we like to be?”

A next step could be for the team to discuss at which level of the rubric they think their school is currently at for each six key activities. By doing this they would be reflecting on the second question, “Where are we now?” If a school received a low score on a rubric item, reflecting on and answering the question “How will we get to where we want to be?” could inform a schoolwide implementation plan.

As seen in Figure 4, the cycle is continually revisited. Every time the cycle of inquiry is used the results enable school leaders to answer the question “How will we improve practice with what we have learned?” In this way, the cycle focuses the team and helps move the school toward achieving its vision for schoolwide SEL.
Figure 4. The Cycle of Inquiry for Schoolwide SEL

Where would we like to be?

Where are we now?

How will we get to where we want to be?

How will we improve practice with what we have learned?
Key Things to Remember

- Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process of acquiring and applying five essential social and emotional competency clusters and related skills and dispositions. It is beneficial for both the adults and the students in a school.

- Schoolwide SEL can be an effective framework for school improvement that includes approaches to promote student success, academic achievement, a supportive school culture and climate, and positive relationships.

- Leadership is crucial to successful implementation and long-term sustainability of SEL programming in a school. Leadership is not the role of one person but the collective efforts of team members who understand what SEL is and why it is important.

- Determining what the school believes to be essential for all learners shapes the development of a shared vision of schoolwide SEL. Without a vision it is difficult to develop goals and a plan to reach them.

- The SEL vision must be clearly communicated to the entire school community in order to build the support needed for effective schoolwide SEL implementation.

- Using a cycle of inquiry can help support the shared SEL vision, improve the school’s approach to SEL, and clarify the progress the school is making and what to prioritize in the future.
References

Chapter 2 - Assess Resources and Needs for Schoolwide SEL

Identifying strengths is an important but all-too-often overlooked early step in creating positive change. Realism is essential. Who can be counted on? What do they have to contribute? Social-emotional learning ... must be built on the existing foundation in your school. Rather than focus primarily on the weak points, it is ultimately more structurally sound (and emotionally intelligent) to work visibly from your school’s strong points.
— Novick, Kress, & Elias, Building Learning Communities with Character

Chapter Topics

- Why Conduct a Resources and Needs Assessment?
- How is a Resources and Needs Assessment for Schoolwide SEL Conducted?
- How Can a Resources and Needs Assessment Guide Planning?

Tools

2.1: School Strengths Inventory
2.2: Making Use of Existing School Outcome Data
2.3: Finding a Measure to Assess Student Social and Emotional Competencies
2.4: Basic Definitions of Important Measurement Concepts
2.5: Measuring School Climate
2.6: Developing Goals for Schoolwide SEL

Why Conduct a Resources and Needs Assessment?

The purpose of this chapter is to help SEL teams take stock in what the school already does to promote student social-emotional competence, positive behavior, and a positive climate. Schools are often already doing things that promote student SEL, but school leaders may be unaware of them or they may be uncoordinated. The resources and needs assessment described here provides a way to gather this information so it can be used to identify existing strengths and gaps where SEL strategies can be developed or improved.

As reflected in the Schoolwide Planning and Implementation Rubric, when done effectively the needs and resources assessment informs the development of specific and measurable goals for SEL and is repeated regularly to determine whether the implementation of the school’s approach is on track. Existing activities can be evaluated relative to the student and climate outcomes they target and improved if necessary. New activities can be considered when there appear to be gaps.

How is a Resources and Needs Assessment for Schoolwide SEL Conducted?

The resources and needs assessment process in this Guide focuses on the three levels of Schoolwide SEL: (1) in classrooms, (2) across the school building as a whole, and (3) in family and community settings. Identifying where SEL is already happening is a way to understand strengths and existing gaps in these areas.
A resources and needs assessment is the “process of scanning the environment using a variety of information to sort out problems, priorities, opportunities, and learning needs so decisions can be made.” In other words, taking an inventory of a school’s available resources and current needs helps the SEL team identify priorities for schoolwide SEL. We call this a *School Strengths Inventory*.

**Who conducts an SEL resources and needs assessment?**

Ideally the resources and needs assessment is collaboratively planned and conducted by the SEL team. When gathering information for this process it is helpful to draw from multiple sources of information and focus on both strengths and opportunities for growth. School and district leaders, school staff members, students, families, youth advocates, and community stakeholders are all good sources for input. To ensure representation of a variety of viewpoints, involve members who reflect the diversity of the school community.

**What types of information are useful to collect?**

The first step in the process involves taking stock of existing activities designed to promote SEL at the three levels. The second step uses data related to student and climate outcomes to assess whether the efforts at each level are effective.

The scope of a resources and needs assessment will vary from one school to another. Some schools may have useful information readily available. Others may be doing this type of assessment for the first time. If new information is needed, the SEL team can help identify ways to build on current data collection efforts to ensure efficiency.

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**Tool 2.1: School Strengths Inventory** is designed to help the SEL team take stock of the ways SEL is already being promoted. The tool has three sections that can be completed at one time or separately over several weeks.

- Section 1: Classroom-level strategies
- Section 2: Building-level strategies
- Section 3: Family- and community-level strategies

Some SEL teams will choose to complete all the sections of this tool to ensure that the resources and needs assessment is comprehensive. In other cases, they may decide to complete only those sections that relate to top school priorities.

At the end of the process the team will have an overview of strengths the school can build on and areas that need to be addressed. This information can be used to help set goals and guide the planning process for schoolwide SEL described in Chapter 1. Information from the resources and needs assessment is revisited throughout the process of planning and implementing schoolwide SEL, and Chapter 6 of this *Guide* provides guidelines for how to make use of this information.

The following sections suggest strategies within the three levels of schoolwide SEL that might be identified as part of the resources and needs assessment. The sections relate to classroom strategies, building-level strategies, and strategies for partnering with families and community agencies.
**Classroom-level strategies: SEL curriculum and instruction.** Promoting social and emotional development for all students in a school involves teaching and modeling social and emotional skills, providing opportunities for students to practice those skills, and giving them an opportunity to demonstrate mastery. When teachers incorporate SEL into their lesson plans and use instructional strategies that promote SEL, students are more engaged and learning is more meaningful.

Section A of **Tool 2.1: School Strengths Inventory** helps the SEL team take stock of ways that SEL is already promoted through curriculum and instruction. This section of the tool addresses:

- Availability of learning standards that relate to SEL
- Explicit instruction of social and emotional content and skills
- Instructional practices that are used to promote SEL

**Use of learning standards that can guide SEL.** Learning standards define what students need to know and be able to do at each grade level. They may be adopted at the state, district, or school level. Since learning standards identify priorities for student learning, they are critically important for a resources and needs assessment. They can help guide the type of goals the SEL team sets, which helps them identify the types of programs and practices to achieve the goals. Linking SEL to learning standards can also help establish and maintain buy-in across the school community.

Most schools have learning standards that guide decisions about curriculum and instruction. Some may be using these standards to help guide SEL programming. Available learning standards could be specific to SEL, or they may have SEL embedded within them.

SEL-specific standards help to define what it means to be ready for school and adulthood and outline social and behavioral expectations that are in line with school climate goals.\(^3\) SEL standards can serve to establish a basis for guiding and assessing students’ mastery of essential social and emotional competencies, documenting progress over time, and planning for delivery of support services.

Even if learning standards are not specific to SEL, they may have SEL embedded in them. For example, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) assume that students will develop a broad range of skills that include cognitive, affective, and behavioral competencies.

**Explicit instruction of social and emotional content and skills.** This is characterized by clearly defining what social and emotional competencies are and then directly teaching the concepts and skills and providing opportunities for students to demonstrate them. Explicit instruction can be enhanced by giving students opportunities to practice the skills they are learning receiving feedback from their teachers and peers.

Often, explicit instruction of SEL skills, knowledge, and attitudes is approached by using an evidence-based SEL program. Some evidence-based SEL programs provide curricular materials that teachers can use to provide explicit instruction.

As part of the resources and needs assessment, the SEL team can take stock of any classroom-based programs currently being used to teach social and emotional skills and content. If the school is not using any evidence-based SEL programs, there may be courses or subject areas that explicitly teach social-emotional skills.
Instructional practices that promote SEL. Instructional practices promote SEL when they can be used to support positive learning environments, enable teachers to model social-emotional competencies for students, and improve student engagement in academic learning. These practical teaching strategies capitalize on how teachers teach as opposed to what they teach.

Some evidence-based SEL programs focus on instructional practices rather than explicit instruction in SEL skills, knowledge, and attitudes. They enhance teachers’ capacities to create a caring, well-managed learning environment that is characterized by respectful social interactions and engaging instruction. Even if a school is not using an evidence-based program, teachers may be using highly effective instructional practices that promote SEL.

Building-level strategies: Schoolwide practices and policies. The second section of Tool 2.1: School Strengths Inventory helps the SEL team take stock of ways SEL is being addressed at the building level. This section of the tool includes:

- Practices that build a safe and supportive climate
- Student support services that address SEL
- After-school activities that incorporate SEL
- Schoolwide policies that support SEL
- Professional learning opportunities for SEL

Practices that build a safe and supportive climate. A safe and supportive school climate is an important factor for improving academic, behavioral, and mental health outcomes for students. The climate of a school is considered safe and supportive when members of the school community feel socially, emotionally, and physically safe, when they feel respected and can contribute to how the school operates, and when school staff model and nurture an attitude that learning is beneficial and satisfying. Strategies that take place outside the classroom that help promote such a climate are strengths to build on. They can complement other SEL programming as schoolwide SEL progresses.

Many schools will find they already have such building-level strategies in place. For example, the National School Climate Council suggests that one effective way to promote positive school climate is establishing clear schoolwide norms, values, and expectations. Another is cultivating positive relationships among students, families, and school staff in order to build a sense of community and trust.

Student support services that address SEL. Student support professionals such as school counselors, social workers, and school psychologists offer a distinct perspective on school resources and needs. Input from these professionals is essential to a comprehensive resources and needs assessment for schoolwide SEL.

Identifying these supports is important beyond just knowing that the school offers such services. It can help the SEL team identify ways to leverage these supports to complement the school’s current and future SEL programming.

The more intensive supports that are offered can be great settings for providing students with additional SEL instruction. In addition, students who need more intensive support can be offered opportunities...
outside of class to practice the skills and content they are learning in small-groups, one-on-one interactions with a student support professional, or within mentoring relationships. Ultimately, SEL could be integrated into supportive services that either focus on behavior or academics.

After-school activities that incorporate SEL. After-school activities can be an opportunity to help students develop and apply new skills and personal talents. Those that devote time to student social and emotional development can significantly increase student self-perceptions, bonding to school, positive social behaviors, grades, and achievement test scores while reducing problem behaviors.

Schoolwide policies that support SEL. Schoolwide policies and procedures have a major impact on students' learning experience. The resources and needs assessment can be strengthened by reviewing policies related to discipline, the district’s philosophy about learning, bullying prevention, and any others that might support schoolwide SEL. Federal, state, or local policies are also important to consider. They may or may not promote schoolwide SEL, and the team will need to determine which is the case and how to address policies that make schoolwide SEL a challenge.

A noteworthy example is the school or district discipline policy. Harsh and punitive discipline policies like “zero tolerance” are not conducive to schoolwide SEL. Such policies prevent flexibility in choosing appropriate responses to discipline problems and also have a negative impact on trust building.

Positive and constructive discipline policies encourage students to learn and develop essential skills, identify problems, think of alternative ways to solve problems, evaluate solutions, and make better decisions. They also provide meaningful instruction in SEL skills and problem solving when students must be removed from class, and they prioritize returning students to the classroom as soon as possible.

Professional learning opportunities for SEL. The more adults can master social and emotional competencies, the better they will be able to model them for students. Adults who have the ability to recognize, understand, label, express, and regulate emotions are more likely to demonstrate patience and empathy, encourage healthy communication, and create safe learning environments.

Professional learning events that focus on adult SEL help school staff excel on their path towards mastery of social and emotional competencies. Even if there are no SEL-specific professional learning opportunities, some professional learning may include aspects of SEL.

Engaging and partnering with families and community. Partnerships with families and organizations in the community are essential to schoolwide SEL. These partnerships are the result of active cultivation of school-community relationships through outreach and providing meaningful roles for families, parents, community partners, and organizations in schoolwide SEL.

Families help support SEL by extending learning into the home and community. How the school communicates with families has an impact on how strong these partnerships are and whether caregivers have meaningful opportunities to provide input and contribute to their children’s education.

Community partners such as community-based organizations, health care providers, or faith-based organizations may be providing services related to SEL. They may also offer opportunities for students to participate in enriching experiences in the community.
The following vignette from Service High School in Anchorage, Alaska, shows how the SEL team involved the staff in renewing its commitment to family involvement.

**Staff Meeting Opinion Continuum**

Service High School (SHS) in the Anchorage School District determined that family engagement and involvement was central for developing student social and emotional skills and promoting academic achievement. Their SEL team developed an interactive activity to support this goal and gauge the staff’s commitment to it. Before this activity began the team facilitator posted three signs around the room, each representing one of the three positions on an opinion continuum – “agree,” “disagree,” and “unsure.”

During the activity the facilitator asked staff to think about the following three statements:

1. In general, I believe that increased community and family engagement will promote students’ academic success.
2. My observation is that the majority of SHS families are enthusiastic about attending SHS activities.
3. I acknowledge that I can do more to facilitate family engagement at SHS.

After thinking about the statements, staff members indicated where they were on the continuum by standing next to the sign that best reflected their opinion. The facilitator asked for volunteers at each position to share their opinion, emphasizing that all responses would be valued. By sharing opinions in this way, the group had a chance to foster enthusiasm and buy-in on this issue while also highlighting possible roadblocks.

This activity provided a process for producing a shared experience. Ultimately it helped the school develop a road map for how to proceed based on the level of staff buy-in and commitment.

**How can student and climate data collected in the school be used for a resources and needs assessment?**

Any information related to student and climate outcomes can inform the resources and needs assessment. We recommend that the SEL team draw upon existing school data as a starting point before collecting any new data. If the decision is to collect new data, overlap can be minimized by integrating and embedding SEL-related data collection with ongoing data collection efforts.

The types of data the SEL team may want to gather include data related to:

- Student social and emotional competencies
- Discipline
- Attendance
- School climate
Tool 2.2: Making Use of Existing School Outcome Data can help the SEL team take stock of current data collection efforts and plan how they can be used for schoolwide SEL. The tool helps organize the types of data that are already collected and provides questions that can be used to reflect on the data. The tool provides an inventory of the outcome data collected at the school that is most relevant to schoolwide SEL efforts, how often it is collected, and who is responsible for collecting it. Completing the tool can also highlight gaps in the available data and additional sources of data that may be helpful.

Data related to student social and emotional competencies. One of the most relevant indicators to assess is students’ level of social and emotional competence. Getting an accurate sense of students’ strengths and areas where they can experience growth in this domain can help ensure that schoolwide SEL is tailored to the students in the school. This information can be gathered through student surveys, student focus groups, reports from teachers, and reports from caregivers.

Tool 2.3 - Finding a Measure to Assess Student Social and Emotional Competencies is designed to help the SEL team identify valid and reliable tools for assessing student social and emotional competencies if it is not already collected. This tool provides explains why it is important to assess these competencies and provides web links to online resources the SEL team can use to determine which assessment measure(s) best fits the school community.

If SEL team members are interested in more details about assessment, they can review Tool 2.4: Definitions of Important Measurement Concepts. This tool provides descriptions of concepts such as validity, reliability, and measurement bias.

When assessing student social and emotional competencies and related skills it is helpful to involve as many respondents as possible. Getting input from students as well as their teachers and caregivers offers a well-rounded picture. Using just one source of information could lead to a one-sided view of students’ level of social-emotional competencies.

Keep in mind that children in preschool through second grade may not be reliable self-reporters. Assessments of social and emotional competencies at these levels often rely heavily on observations and reports from teachers and families. Self-report methods like surveys are appropriate for students in grades three and above.

Discipline referrals. Knowing about the type and frequency of discipline referrals can help the SEL team get a snapshot of student behavior across the school. An alternative strengths-based perspective could track the percentage of students who have not had discipline referrals—a way to balance concerns about discipline with a positive orientation.

Reviewing discipline-related data can help identify how often referrals happen, what problem behaviors occur most frequently in the building, where and when these events occur, and whether some grade levels are involved less or more than others.

Attendance data. Information about attendance is a reflection of students’ engagement in school. It can be helpful in identifying grade levels or subject areas where students may be more or less engaged and where efforts can be focused to fostering students’ connections to others.
School climate data. School climate measures may be completed by students, staff, and/or family members. When a school knows how different groups within the school community perceive the quality and character of the learning environment, goals for schoolwide SEL and school improvement can be developed that incorporate these perceptions. A good resource for valid and reliable school climate surveys is the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE). Their website provides a compendium of school climate surveys.

Tool 2.5: Measuring School Climate

is designed to help SEL teams in schools that do not collect school climate data identify a measure that best fits their school community.

The tool is also useful for SEL teams in schools that already administer a school climate measure. It can help the team examine the adequacy of the measure and whether it fully addresses the school’s priorities.

Although surveys are an efficient way to gather information about school climate, some schools may prefer to collect richer data through focus groups. A useful online resource that describes a focus group process can be found in the Community Toolbox developed by the University of Kansas.

In an effort to reach out to students and learn more about their perceptions of safety, an elementary school in Barrington, Ill. involved their students in a novel approach to data collection.

Students and Assessment

An elementary school in Barrington, Ill., wanted to engage students in their resources and needs assessment. To get an impression of students’ perceptions of safety in an efficient way, they gave each student red and green stickers and asked them to place them around the school to indicate where they felt safe (green stickers) and unsafe (red stickers). This provided a visual representation of hot spots in the school and helped the planning team make decisions about where in the school to focus programming.

After this activity the school held a schoolwide assembly to discuss the results with students and asked teachers to address any concerns or issues the activity raised in their individual classrooms. To avoid singling out any one teacher, the school looked at the information provided by students at the school level and not at the classroom level. This was only the first step in their approach. They planned to assess student-teacher relationships at the classroom level at a later time to ensure their resources and needs assessment was comprehensive.

How Can a Resources and Needs Assessment Guide SEL Planning?

The most important use of a resources and needs assessment is for developing goals and action plans for schoolwide SEL. The following sections describe ways to use the results to establish high-quality goals and create action plans.

SMART goals

Goal setting is fundamental to any schoolwide effort. Although the SEL vision is a broad statement of the schools’ hopes for its students, goals are a more focused description of what the school wants to
achieve. Without goals, it’s difficult for everyone to know what the school is striving toward. For this reason, schools might want to consider incorporating their goals for schoolwide SEL into the school’s improvement plan.

An effective way to develop goals is to use the SMART approach. The elements of SMART goals are:

- **Specific**: Does each goal clearly state what is to be accomplished and for whom? Where appropriate, does it specify where and by whom activities should be carried out?

- **Measurable**: Does each goal refer to a measurable outcome? Does it set a standard that will inform the team whether or not the goal has been achieved?

- **Attainable**: Does the goal seem reachable given where things are now?

- **Realistic/Relevant**: Will attaining the stated goal make a difference in the quality of students’ lives? Are the goals aligned with other school improvement goals?

- **Timely**: Has a timeframe been established for achieving each goal? Can shorter-term benchmarks be set so progress towards each of the goals can be monitored along the way?

**Tool 2.6: Developing Goals for Schoolwide SEL** helps guide the SEL team in collaboratively developing and documenting student and climate goals for schoolwide SEL. The tool can be completed first after the team reviews the information collected during the resources and needs assessment. Afterwards the team can share the goals with the rest of the school community and revise the goals as needed. Participation of the broader school community can ensure buy-in and a mutual commitment to the goals.

When setting goals the team may have a variety of information sources. For example, if they completed **Tool 2.1: School Strengths Inventory**, they already have an overview of current strategies, areas of strength, and areas that are in need.

**Incorporating goals into the plan for schoolwide SEL**

As mentioned in the first chapter of this Guide, planning is critical to launching successful and sustainable schoolwide SEL. Schools may be inclined to skip this phase and move directly to initial implementation, but planning is an essential step. There is no magic formula for a good planning process. It depends on how much time and energy the school is willing to commit to the effort.

The findings from **Tool 2.1: School Strengths Inventory** are invaluable when planning for schoolwide SEL, especially when they are used with **Tool 2.6: Developing Goals for Schoolwide SEL**. If there is a gap in strategies to promote SEL at one of the setting levels the SEL team can start by developing a goal for a student or climate outcome at that level. The last question of the goal development framework in **Tool 2.6: Developing Goals for Schoolwide SEL** is to reflect on how each goal will be achieved. This process enables the SEL team to incorporate these action steps into **Tool 1.2: Developing a Schoolwide Implementation Plan**.
Most strategies will fit under activities related to professional learning, schoolwide programming for SEL, and integrating SEL into the core functioning of the school. For example, if student data suggest that levels of student social and emotional competence can be improved and a goal is to increase instructional practices that promote SEL in classrooms, this goal could be addressed by providing professional learning to staff or adopting an evidence-based SEL program. If an identified need is to improve the effectiveness of an existing SEL strategy the guidelines in Chapter 5 for integrating SEL into existing school practices will help the team to develop relevant action steps.

Setting clear goals is critical since they can be used as a basis for monitoring progress. Plans for achieving these goals are most helpful when they are concise and include the specific activities that will be completed to achieve the goals.

Any goals for schoolwide SEL should also be incorporated in the school improvement plan and aligned with other key school initiatives, documents, and reports. From the beginning of the planning process, the SEL team can also consider the long-term sustainability of the schoolwide SEL effort and consider ways to promote this.

The vignette below describes how a middle school in the Austin Independent School District engaged the school community in the development of a schoolwide SEL plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developing a Multイヤor Plan</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fulmore Middle School in the Austin Independent School District has set and met annual goals for schoolwide SEL implementation. The SEL team meets monthly to focus their time and energy on achievable schoolwide strategies. During their first year of implementation, all teachers learned about the evidence-based SEL program that had been selected and then facilitated it during the school’s advisory period. Since the evidence-based program directly taught social and emotional skills, Fulmore renamed their advisories as “Social Emotional Learning.” These SEL periods set aside daily time when teachers could promote a sense of community and form a foundation on which the school could build in the second year of implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In year two, with help from their district SEL coach, the SEL team built a year-long “sustainable” schedule of SEL lessons and activities. One example of why they referred to the schedule as sustainable is the SEL team members are not assigned students during the SEL periods. Instead they provided support such as acting as substitutes to teach the SEL lessons when a teacher was absent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In year three Fulmore will build on and sustain SEL by developing year-long lesson packets for teachers, including consumable materials for students. They will also consolidate the different problem-solving methods currently used in academic classes to develop a common method and common language for resolving disputes. As part of their community-building strategy they will focus on team-building lessons.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key Things to Remember

- The initial resource and needs assessment is the first of several times during the SEL planning and implementation process that data will be collected to guide next steps.

- This Guide recommends that this assessment be collaboratively planned and conducted by the SEL team.

- Information and data can be gathered in several ways and from a variety of sources commonly found in schools.

- The entire school community, including students, is a source of information to guide data collection and planning.

- SMART goals ensure that action plans are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely.

- The resources and needs assessment is a key process for continuous improvement and for developing an implementation plan for schoolwide SEL.

- Incorporating tasks that promote sustainability is a critical part of the planning process.
References


Chapter 3 - Provide Ongoing Professional Learning

Improvement is a continuous process without a beginning or end. Because professional learning is at the core of every effort to increase educator effectiveness and results for all students, its quality and effectiveness cannot be left to chance... When educators’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions change, they have a broader repertoire of effective strategies to use to adapt their practices to meet performance expectations and student learning needs. Learning Forward

Chapter Topics

- Why is Ongoing Professional Learning Important?
- What is Effective Professional Learning for Schoolwide SEL?
- What Content and Topics Should Be Considered for Professional Learning for SEL?
- What Approaches Support Effective Professional Learning?

Tools

3.1: Developing Awareness of Instructional Strategies that Promote SEL
3.2: Improving SEL Implementation with a Professional Learning Community
3.3: Recommended SEL Readings
3.4: Social and Emotional Focused Learning Walk

Why is Ongoing Professional Learning Important?

The purpose of this chapter is to provide guidelines for professional learning for schoolwide SEL. It is important to provide all members of the school community with professional learning opportunities so they understand SEL and are able to support it.

As reflected on the Schoolwide Planning and Implementation Rubric, high-quality schoolwide SEL involves not only providing an introduction to SEL for staff but also offering ongoing professional learning and support. Collaborative professional learning is critical to a school’s success. High-quality implementation of this element of schoolwide SEL takes into account both the content and format of professional learning.

What is Effective Professional Learning for Schoolwide SEL?

We use the term “professional learning” instead of “professional development” to emphasize the need for educators to be actively involved in a learning community whose purpose is to strengthen its members’ skills and knowledge. Essential to improving the impact of professional learning is recognizing and leveraging it schoolwide rather than using it solely as a means for individual professional growth.

Learning Forward, a nonprofit association formerly known as the National Staff Development Council, has developed useful standards for professional learning. Drawing on research findings and evidence-based practice, the Learning Forward standards can guide how professional learning is facilitated and
evaluated. Learning Forward\textsuperscript{1} defines four prerequisites that are fundamental for effective professional learning:

- **Educators’ commitment to all students is the foundation of effective professional learning.** Committed educators understand why they engage in continual growth and improvement to know enough and be skilled enough to meet the learning needs of all students. They continually seek to deepen knowledge and expand their set of skills.
- **Professional learning is a partnership among professionals who come to the experience ready to learn.** They want and deserve high-quality learning experiences that are relevant and useful.
- **Because experience levels and practices among educators vary widely,** professional learning can enhance individual and collective performance through collaborative inquiry and learning. This happens when educators listen to one another, respect one another’s experiences and perspectives, and hold students’ best interests as a high professional priority.
- **Educators learn in different ways and at different rates.** Professional learning must engage each participant in timely, effective ways that meet his or her particular learning needs.

Professional learning is most effective when it is supported by school leaders, provides participants with opportunities to practice what they are learning, and allows time for reflecting on progress. A commitment to SEL professional learning from all stakeholders in the school, including the endorsement of a shared vision by school staff and administrators, is also important.\textsuperscript{4,5}

The vignette below demonstrates how Leataata Floyd Elementary School in Sacramento, Calif., developed a professional learning structure for schoolwide SEL. Their approach establishes SEL as a priority and makes time for staff to share and learn from their collective experience.

### SEL Professional Learning Structure

Sacramento’s Leataata Floyd Elementary School uses a collective and collaborative structure for professional learning about SEL. The structure emphasizes three critical concepts: time, universal implementation, and leadership.

“**Time**” means that SEL is an instructional priority. Professional learning has a place on every meeting agenda and professional activity, and time is dedicated every week throughout the school year for staff members to discuss, review, reflect on, and improve classroom and schoolwide SEL implementation.

“**Universal implementation**” means that all adults at the school participate in ongoing professional learning for SEL. Adults practice the SEL skills they are learning so they can lead students and families in SEL activities. Participating school personnel include classroom teachers, office staff, paraprofessionals, yard duty supervisors, cafeteria staff, after-school staff, and any other adult who touches students’ lives.

“**Leadership**” refers to the expectation that everyone should be part of establishing and developing a positive school culture. Every adult and student in the school is encouraged to model and reinforce SEL in every aspect of school life. Funding and other forms of support are allocated to facilitate the professional SEL-related learning opportunities and programming.

Staff members are motivated to participate in these professional learning opportunities because they are teacher-led, provide a safe learning environment for open sharing of experiences and ideas,
highlight practical teaching practices, and address the academic, social, and emotional needs of students in ways that are relevant and practical.

What Content and Topics Should Be Considered for Professional Learning for SEL?

Appropriate content and topics for professional learning range from initial awareness building to ongoing professional learning that improves and sustains SEL practices over time. They include:

- Introduction to SEL
- Identifying and practicing instructional practices that promote SEL
- Initiating classroom exchanges and dialogue about SEL practices
- Schoolwide Planning and Implementation Rubric

Introduction to SEL

One of the first tools that can be used to build awareness about SEL was introduced in Chapter 1—Tool 1.7 – Becoming an SEL School. This tool includes an introduction to:

- The five SEL core competencies.
- A review of the supporting theory and research.
- The importance of adult SEL competence in teaching and modeling SEL
- Key strategies for schoolwide SEL.
- The importance of a systemic approach to schoolwide SEL.

Building adult social and emotional competence

To teach SEL effectively, adults need to be aware of and enhance their own social and emotional competence so they can teach, model, and reinforce SEL. When adults demonstrate a strong level of social and emotional competence in all of their interactions in the school and in their instructional practice, they are better able to work together as a staff and help cultivate social and emotional competence in students.

Tool 1.5: Personal Assessment and Reflection Tool: SEL Competencies for School Leaders, Staff, and Adults (see Chapter 1) can be used to reflect on adult SEL skills and competence. The tool can be used in school or district orientations to familiarize new teachers and staff members with descriptions of adult SEL competence.

The Chicago Public Schools recognize the importance of strengthening adult social and emotional knowledge, skills, and attitudes among administrators, teachers, and school staff through a series of professional learning events.
Building Adult Social and Emotional Competence

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) realized early in its SEL journey that fostering social and emotional competence in adults is essential for them to be effective SEL leaders and teachers. The central office and school leaders have made it a priority to strengthen the connection between a positive learning environment and the personal and instructional skillfulness of the adults who are teaching, modeling, and reinforcing SEL.

To that end, CPS engages leadership teams in an experience of Tool 1.2: Personal Assessment and Reflection - SEL Competencies for School Leaders, Staff, and Adults in all of its introductory SEL workshops. Team members start by identifying and reflecting on their own SEL competencies. During the process they identify their strengths and areas where they would like to grow. They also plan how to engage colleagues in an ongoing process of building these skills throughout the school.

In addition, the district facilitates one-day workshops for leadership teams on adult social and emotional competence using the book, Emotional Intelligence 2.0, by Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves. The book includes a widely used emotional intelligence appraisal that can be accessed online. Leadership teams are encouraged to use the book at their school sites as a book study or part of their ongoing professional learning plan. Teams from 25 schools have participated, and more will be involved as districtwide SEL continues.

Identifying and practicing instructional practices that promote SEL

If the transition to SEL is a “long reach” for some teachers, it will be helpful to encourage staff members to begin talking about, learning about, and using SEL instructional practices.

**Tool 3.1: Developing Awareness of Instructional Practices that Promote SEL** is designed to help teachers think about instructional strategies that create a relationship-centered, SEL-oriented classroom. This tool is for self-reflection, not for evaluation. Teachers may use it independently to develop their own self-awareness about their use of instructional practices that promote SEL or it can be used in group settings where teachers discuss practices they use and learn from each other.

Schoolwide Planning and Implementation Rubric

Professional learning focused on CASEL’s School Theory of Action can be used by the principal and SEL team to engage the entire school staff in “beginning with the end in mind.” It can help them focus on the current approach to professional learning and planning for staff to support and sustain schoolwide SEL.

**Schoolwide Planning and Implementation Rubric** includes benchmarks that indicate progress toward fully supporting schoolwide SEL. Completing the rubric and reflecting on the ratings can highlight strengths and areas that could benefit from additional professional learning.
What Approaches Support Effective Professional Learning?

To create a culture for learning that helps adults learn and model SEL skills experts recommend a context for professional learning that is ongoing, collaborative, reflective, and based on knowledge about adult learning.

Adults in a school learn best when they can meet on a regular basis and learn from each other through sharing, observation, reflection, and feedback. It is also important to have a school leader who sets a tone and structure that is meaningful and long-lasting. By modeling socially and emotionally competent behavior, promoting collaboration among teachers through deliberate school structures, and designating enough time and funding, school leaders can ensure that adequate professional learning takes place.

Structured and well-thought-out professional learning that includes ongoing staff reflection and discussion keeps SEL fresh and engaging. As instructional staff develop a deeper understanding of SEL and broaden their repertoire of SEL teaching practices, professional learning might also incorporate personalized mentoring or coaching experiences.

Several approaches stand out in the research literature as being particularly effective:

- Active participation of the principal
- Professional learning communities
- Teacher collaboration
- Reflection and celebration
- Professional advancement and growth opportunities
- Modeling and coaching
- Using data to plan and evaluate professional learning

Active participation of the principal

The principal has an important role to play in carrying out professional learning activities and helping to embed SEL into daily practice. In addition to allocating the necessary resources for professional learning, the principal is responsible for introducing the school community to SEL and generating enthusiasm about implementing SEL schoolwide.

It is important for the principal to be an active participant in all professional learning related to SEL. Together, the principal and the SEL team can guide the types of professional learning events that will meet the needs of staff as they move forward with schoolwide SEL.

As professional learning for SEL advances, the principal can keep staff morale high by providing consistent feedback, opportunities to reflect on progress, and support and encouragement. A relationship of trust and mutual respect is more likely to develop when specific positive feedback is used, as opposed to vague, general praise. At the same time, an opportunity for staff to provide feedback and express concerns is an essential element of the process. It is also helpful for principals to recognize outstanding staff accomplishments through public events, celebrations, and announcements.
Professional learning communities

Structured collaboration where educators meet regularly to identify priorities, analyze student achievement, share successful practices, and set goals is critical to successful schoolwide SEL. A professional learning community (PLC) is such an approach.

The importance of a focused and structured approach within PLCs has been well documented. Early in the PLC’s formation it will be important to identify norms or shared agreements for the way the group will function. It is best if all members of the PLC provide input before coming to a consensus. Core elements of PLCs include a strong focus on:

**Student learning**
- Identifying what students need to learn.
- Applying new or revised approaches and practices in the classroom.
- Knowing when students have learned new concepts.
- Knowing how teachers should respond when students are successful or when they experience difficulty with the new concepts.

**Professionalism of teachers**
- Honoring the expertise, experience, and professionalism of the staff.
- Demonstrating commitment to learning and holding each other accountable for results.
- Strengthening collaboration by supporting staff in improving their own SEL competencies.
- Establishing and maintaining a culture of quality.
- Providing time for inquiry and reflection.

**Data**
- Collecting, analyzing, and learning from data related to student work and teacher practice.
- Judging the group’s effectiveness based on results.
- Learning through observation, reflection, and feedback from others.

Different ways to structure PLCs include:

- **Study groups** in which staff read and discuss the same material.
- **Action research teams** that reflect on and discuss the implications of SEL-related classroom activities with others and take further action steps based on the group’s reflections.
- **Conversation circles** that include all members’ voices on a specific topic. This includes a specific process for identifying important issues and focusing the conversation.
- **Communicating online** through online groups, discussion forums, conference calls, or video conferencing.

Whatever form a PLC takes, it can be implemented in staff meetings, grade level or department meetings, or during professional development days. To determine needed school improvements, review **Tool 2.1: School Strengths Inventory** and **Tool 2.6: Developing Goals for SEL Implementation**.
One of the most powerful ways that educators can collaborate is through professional learning communities. **Tool 3.2: Improving SEL Implementation with a Professional Learning Community** provides a way to include SEL in a school’s daily functions and activities.

### Teacher collaboration

Examples include:

- **Creating collaborative classrooms.** Teachers who are promoting schoolwide SEL can use each other as a resource, a sounding board for ideas, a partner for sharing successes, and a support when things aren’t going smoothly. Collaborating teachers can also work together on activities or projects. They can collaborate across or within grade levels and subjects. Planning time is an important factor in maximizing the benefits of this approach.

- **Pairing early implementers with new implementers.** It can be helpful to pair teachers who have already been implementing SEL with teachers who are just starting to incorporate SEL into their classrooms. The more experienced teachers can serve as mentors and guides.

- **Encouraging grade-level teams to make SEL a regular item on their meeting agendas.** Each time a grade-level team meets, they can share successes, frustrations, ideas, new readings, and student-related information about how they are integrating SEL into curriculum and instruction.

- **Providing support for teachers to visit other schools implementing SEL.** Find out about schools that are successfully implementing SEL and provide release time for teachers to visit their classrooms.

The example below from Farragut Career Center in Chicago, Ill. shows how their professional learning community started and then expanded to include the whole staff and the greater school community.

### Professional Learning Community

With little time in the regular professional development calendar to dedicate to SEL, Chicago’s Farragut Career Academy in Chicago formed a professional learning community (PLC) to enhance collaborative learning about SEL among school staff. To establish the PLC, all teachers and education support professionals in the school were invited to three two-hour meetings. These events were, facilitated by the SEL leader, were held after school.

After establishing the PLC, staff investment in SEL grew. At the PLC meetings staff members had opportunities to collaborate, and discuss how to incorporate SEL into classroom management further integrate SEL into course units.

Beyond the monthly meetings, PLC members met on various occasions to create a schoolwide SEL curriculum plan, collaborate on implementing classroom management strategies, and involve security staff with their efforts. To engage the greater school community, the SEL leader regularly distributed electronic newsletters that included “best practices” for SEL instruction.
Reflection and celebration

In addition to creating opportunities for teachers to support each other, it is helpful when staff feel supported by school leaders and the SEL team. This can be achieved in a variety of ways.

- **Reflection circles.** These are structured small-group conversations that provide an opportunity to talk about how SEL is going in classrooms.
- **Celebration.** By acknowledging achievement and drawing attention to positive outcomes, the entire school community can feel included in schoolwide SEL. Celebrations might include student presentations about SEL-related work, family nights with an SEL theme, or integration of SEL into other events, ceremonies, or special assemblies.

Professional advancement and growth opportunities

As the school becomes increasingly comfortable with SEL, momentum can be sustained by providing information about new strategies and developments in the field. Ways to provide continuing growth opportunities and promote learning and sharing include:

- Encourage teachers and staff members to present about SEL to staff, at a parent and family group such as a PTO meeting, at the board of education, at conferences, and to community groups. Bring in speakers to talk about SEL-related topics.
- Invite teachers to attend workshops and conferences that will keep them up to date on the latest findings and programs in the field.
- Distribute interesting articles about SEL from the field on a regular basis and provide opportunities to discuss them.

Tool 3.3: Recommended SEL Readings provides references to reading materials that can deepen knowledge and practice of SEL. These resources can be used in school book study groups and faculty meetings. Also, a section of the school library focused on SEL can be created.

The vignette below describes how the Washoe County School District facilitated their successful SEL book study project.

**SEL Book Study Project**

One of the Washoe County School District’s most successful professional learning activities during its first year of implementing SEL was their SEL book study project. The project reached both district-level and site-based staff.

The study groups began with the book *Promoting Social and Emotional Learning: Guidelines for Educators.* This book helped to build a common language and understanding about social and emotional learning. The combination of information about SEL with examples of SEL in practice sparked conversations and provided ideas for how to implement SEL.

After reading and discussing this book, site-based participants were encouraged to explore other resources and choose which one they wanted to focus on for the second half of the book study project. This led to rich discussions, sharing of ideas and practices, and discussions about next steps for their
At the district level each group member reviewed a book of his or her choice and shared ideas from the book with the rest of the group. Both groups adapted the process to fit the needs of the participants.

Modeling, coaching, and observation

Coaching involves observing teachers, asking questions to guide reflection, and giving focused, constructive feedback. The coach and teacher generate ideas collaboratively for integrating SEL into instruction and resolving issues and questions. Professional learning efforts that include coaching and opportunities for learners to practice are more effective at influencing teaching practices and, in turn, leading to gains in student learning.\(^2\)

Coaches, who may include the principal or teacher leaders, can model direct teaching of social and emotional skills. Teacher leaders might be classroom teachers who have been released for a half day, a person who works part-time as a classroom teacher and the rest of his/her time as an SEL coach, or a full-time SEL coach.

Peer coaching pairs teachers as learning partners. Together they define the SEL practices they will use in their classrooms, observe each other using the practices in action, and follow up with reflection and discussion.

A useful way to incorporate observation into professional learning is by conducting classroom walkthroughs. These “learning walks” can be used for growth and reflection to improve practice.

Tool 3.4: SEL Focused Learning Walk provides a nonevaluative protocol for conducting learning walks in classrooms. These structured observations focus on social and emotional learning. Information gathered during this process provides a picture of current strengths that can be observed in relation to how schoolwide SEL is being put into practice in classrooms.

The following vignette describes how the Oakland Unified School District does this through a process known as “instructional rounds.”

Instructional Rounds

Instructional rounds that enable teachers and other staff members to observe each other’s classrooms have had a significant impact in Oakland. In contrast to the traditional notion that classroom practice is a strictly private matter, instructional rounds that use an agreed upon protocol have enabled educators to visit each other’s classrooms and observe and comment on the teaching and learning process.

The rounds have helped to deepen conversations about practice in a supportive and authentic way and open the door to collaborative peer observations. They have helped teachers feel more willing and comfortable about opening their classrooms for mutual learning and professional growth.
Key things to remember

- Effective professional learning is ongoing, collaborative, reflective, and based on knowledge about adult learning.

- Professional learning needs to be fully supported by the administration, including the active participation and involvement of principals and school leaders in professional learning activities.

- Effective professional learning begins with the full commitment of the school principal and the SEL team.

- Professional learning for schoolwide SEL shifts from building awareness of the five SEL core competencies to identifying what the school is already doing to implement SEL and creating structured opportunities for staff to share, reflect, and build on these practices.

- Opportunities to include professional learning about SEL include putting SEL on faculty meeting agendas, reading SEL materials, making SEL presentations to school and community groups, and including SEL in all professional learning events.

- Classroom observations of teachers using SEL programs and practices provide concrete and practical evidence of the benefits of SEL and motivation to expand it throughout the school.

- Professional learning related to SEL is most effective when supported by carefully planned follow-up that may include such options as peer support and modeling and coaching by staff familiar with SEL.
References


Chapter 4 - Adopt Evidence-Based SEL Programs

There is a clarion call from educators working in schools and school systems for programs that work, that help students grow and progress, and that make a difference for learning and development. Evidence-based programs, such as those highlighted in the 2013 CASEL Guide, provide teachers, principals, and district leaders with a clear sense of programs that can advance social and emotional learning in their settings. Using an evidence-based program removes the guesswork for educators practicing SEL in their classrooms and schools.

— Paul Goren, Superintendent at Evanston/Skokie School District 65

Chapter Topics

- Why Adopt an Evidence-Based SEL Program?
- What Are Helpful Strategies for Adopting an Evidence-Based SEL Program?
- What Are Some Considerations for Initial Professional Learning for the Adopted Evidence-Based Program?

Tools

4.1: Aligning Goals and Priorities
4.2: Identifying Evidence-Based SEL Programs
4.3: Reviewing Evidence-Based SEL Programs
4.4: Planning for Professional Learning on Evidence-Based SEL Programs

Why Adopt an Evidence-Based SEL Program?

The purpose of this chapter is to provide guidelines for how a school can engage in a reflection process that results in the adoption of an evidence-based approach to SEL that is a good fit for their unique school community. Research has shown that students who participate in SEL programming that is implemented with quality demonstrate higher levels of social and emotional skill and prosocial behavior, engage in less aggressive and delinquent behavior, and experience less depression and anxiety compared to students in classrooms that do not use evidence-based SEL programs.\(^1\)\(^2\) Students exposed to evidence-based SEL programs also do better academically.\(^1\)

As reflected in the Schoolwide Planning and Implementation Rubric, evidence-based SEL programs are most effective when they are used at all grade levels and when they are implemented with a high degree of fidelity. We recommend that these practices be reinforced throughout the day so students have opportunities to practice them and apply them in real situations. Providing professional learning and ongoing support have also been shown to promote high-quality implementation.

What is an evidence-based SEL program?

CASEL considers approaches to be evidence-based when they are (1) grounded in research, SEL theory, and principles of child and adolescent development and (2) when they have been scientifically evaluated and shown to produce positive outcomes related to students’ skills and behaviors. CASEL strongly recommends programs that seek to foster SEL for all students—in other words, a “universal” approach.
to SEL. In addition, we recommend that the selected approach include SEL strategies and practices integrated with classroom instruction so students can apply the social and emotional skills they are learning to everyday situations.

SEL programs promote better student outcomes when they are “SAFE,” meaning they include:

- **Sequenced**, step-by-step approaches to building skills.
- **Active** forms of learning that require students to practice new skills.
- **Focused** time and attention specifically devoted to skill development.
- **Explicit** teaching of social and emotional skills.

Another important element to consider is whether programs provide opportunities for students to practice the skills they are learning, an essential element for effective skills development.\(^1\),\(^4\) Also take into account whether opportunities for practice are provided beyond classroom lessons since practice in daily situations is likely to have greater impact.\(^5\)\(^-\)\(^7\)

CASEL also strongly recommends that evidence-based SEL programs be complemented by schoolwide programming that extends beyond classrooms and throughout the school. This integration can make SEL more meaningful, sustainable, feasible, and effective.\(^8\) Chapter 5 presents a variety of ways to accomplish this.

**What Are Helpful Strategies for Adopting an Evidence-Based SEL Program?**

Selecting a program is one of the most important tasks the SEL team will undertake. We recommend that the entire team be involved in the selection process, but some schools may prefer to have a subcommittee do the leg work and then share their findings with the rest of the team.

We also recommend involving the teachers who will eventually implement evidence-based programs in the selection process. This helps strengthen buy-in and ensures that the selected program will fit their workload, their instructional philosophy, and their sense of the program’s relevance for their students.

Be sure to allow enough time for the selection process. This is likely to take two to three meetings over a period of several weeks or more. The activities involved in the selection process are:

- Align priorities for evidence-based SEL programs with SEL goals.
- Identify evidence-based SEL program candidates that address priorities.
- Review information about programs to narrow the search.
- Contact and visit schools using the program.
- Complete the selection process.

**Align priorities for evidence-based SEL programs with SEL goals**

Goals for schoolwide SEL can serve as guideposts that help the SEL team identify evidence-based SEL programs that best fit their school. If **Tool: 2.6 Developing Goals for Schoolwide SEL** was used to develop these goals (see Chapter 2), then they will be directly linked to the school’s unique resources and needs. The SEL team can also consider additional goals the school community has for ongoing improvement efforts.
The process of reviewing school goals can be used to establish a set of priorities that will be used to judge how well an evidence-based SEL program “fits” with the school. This will help narrow the options to those programs that would best address the priorities. For example, the priorities may include improving relationships among teachers and students, increasing students’ ability to solve problems in peaceful ways, and better meeting the needs of English learners. Programs that appear to address these priorities could then be considered the top candidates.

**Tool 4.1: Aligning Goals and Priorities** can be used to initiate a discussion about the school’s SEL and/or school improvement goals. The tool includes discussion questions that can be used in an SEL team meeting to summarize the school’s priorities for SEL. This summary can then be used when deciding which evidence-based SEL programs are the best candidates for addressing these priorities.

If SEL standards are available, the SEL team can consider them during the program selection process. Evidence-based SEL programs that can help students meet the standards should be high on the list of potential for serious consideration.

The two vignettes below describe how Marcus Garvey School in Chicago and Luther Burbank High School in Sacramento selected an evidence-based SEL program.

### Adopting an Evidence-Based Program for Balanced Instruction

At Marcus Garvey School in the Chicago Public Schools, SEL was already incorporated into their balanced instructional model. To enhance their approach to schoolwide SEL, a team of staff leaders decided to look for an evidence-based SEL program that could provide sequenced and consistent social and emotional skills instruction for students in all grade levels.

To help establish priorities for what they wanted the program to address, the team reviewed data from the district’s climate survey for their school. This helped them better understand the perspectives of their student body. When reviewing the climate data they discovered that students in their school did not feel connected to the adults.

The team decided that they wanted to adopt a program that could help teachers and students relate more effectively and build their social and emotional competencies. To help identify a program that fit their priorities, they chose a program from the 2013 *Guide: Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs—Preschool and Elementary School Edition*. It was designed to teach all five SEL core competencies explicitly and included schoolwide components.

Since then the school has integrated the state of Illinois’ SEL Learning Standards with the evidence-based SEL program and with all subject areas. This has helped to embed SEL into the core curriculum.

To sustain SEL the school uses tracking forms to help teachers stay up-to-date on lesson coordination and implementation. Staff members are offered ongoing professional learning opportunities to ensure a high level of quality. Also offered are related trainings for adults in the greater community.

Having an evidence-based program has given the school a common language, an effective curriculum, and a way to coordinate schoolwide SEL.
Choosing an Evidence-based Program at the High School Level

Luther Burbank is a large comprehensive high school in the Sacramento City Unified School District. The school is organized around the Small Learning Communities (SLC) concept. The SEL team at Burbank helped pilot this Guide, and during that process they used the Schoolwide Planning and Implementation Rubric. Exploring and using the rubric helped them reach consensus that their school had already established a strong school vision, culture, and climate focused on academic, social, and emotional development.

The SEL team agreed that the school was ready for an evidence-based SEL program. They wanted one that offered lessons with engaging content that designed to develop students’ social and emotional skills. A team from each of the SLCs researched an evidenced-based SEL program selected from a carefully researched list. The SLC teams then shared what they learned with the SEL team.

After reviewing the information the SEL team recommended a specific program to the principal. The principal then met with the program’s developer and also visited school sites that were implementing the program. After a final decision was made to adopt the program, the next step was to identify where in the school day focused SEL instruction would take place.

Ultimately, the school chose ninth-grade geography and English. They decided on ninth grade since it represents the gateway to high school, college, career, and life success. Although they started with ninth-graders, their long-term plan will integrate the program into Grades 10-12 as well.

Identify evidence-based SEL program candidates that address priorities

CASEL has developed clear criteria for identifying evidence-based SEL programs. These are referred to as “SELEct criteria.” Programs meeting CASEL SELEct criteria (1) are well-designed and promote students’ social and emotional skills, (2) provide high-quality professional learning to support implementation, and (3) are evidence-based. We encourage SEL teams to use Tool 4.2: Identifying Evidence-Based SEL programs to help identify programs that fit with their school’s goals and priorities.

The tool has two sections. The first is based on the 2013 CASEL Guide and provides guidance on finding programs for students in preschool through the elementary grades.

The second section describes online sources that can help identify programs for the middle school and high school levels. It offers guidance for navigating these sources to identify programs that focus on SEL.

The following vignette describes how the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools adopted evidence-based SEL programs. This is a district-level example that used predetermined criteria to select from a list of program candidates.
Evidence-Based SEL Program Adoption

In the fall of 2012 the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools used a request for proposals (RFP) process to identify and select evidence-based SEL programs. Central to the selection process was a district committee with representation from several departments.

To be eligible for selection a program had to:

- Include CASEL’s five social and emotional learning core competencies.
- Be school-based and provide sequenced lessons to general student populations.
- Include lessons for at least two consecutive grades or grade spans, or have a structure that promotes lesson reinforcement beyond the first program year.
- Be supported by at least one year of evidence demonstrating effectiveness.
- Provide professional learning and implementation support that goes beyond an initial workshop to include on-site observation and coaching.

A well-qualified program was ultimately selected for adoption districtwide in the elementary schools. At the secondary level two different programs were selected for districtwide adoption. The committee also chose several other SEL programs during the RFP process that individual schools could purchase with their own funds.

Review information about programs to narrow the search

After identifying evidence-based SEL programs to consider adopting the SEL team can focus on learning more about each program to see how well it aligns with school priorities. A common starting point is to visit a program’s website. A few things to look for are:

- An overview of the program and how it approaches social and emotional skill development.
- The scope and sequence of the program’s content.
- Whether the program helps promote use of instructional practices that support SEL and foster positive relationships.
- Information about the cultural sensitivity and linguistic responsiveness of the program.
- Sample materials and videos illustrating the program in actual classrooms and schools.
- Research reports.
- Professional learning and support for ongoing technical assistance.
- Overview of costs associated with implementing the program.

**Tool 4.3: Reviewing Evidence-Based SEL Programs** can be used by the SEL team to keep track of characteristics of each of the programs under consideration. Worksheets from the tool can be used for each program to simplify program comparisons.
A way to explore programs in more depth is to contact the program developers directly. This gives the SEL team a chance to request a sample of the program materials. The team may also be interested in getting detailed information about:

- Costs of core program materials.
- Cost of supplemental materials such as materials for families.
- Specific ways the program addresses cultural relevance and linguistic sensitivity.
- Costs for professional learning and other kinds of implementation support such as on-site coaching and consultation.
- Whether the program can certify district and school staff to deliver workshops or other professional learning events on their own (e.g., a train-the-trainer approach).
- Availability of guidance and tools for monitoring implementation and evaluating student outcomes.

Contact and visit schools using the program

If resources permit, consider visiting schools that have experience with the program. One way to go about this is to ask the program developers to provide contact information for schools using their program. If distance and travel preclude a visit to these schools, consider arranging telephone conversations with practitioners who have first-hand experience with the program. This can help verify the accuracy of the information the team has gathered from program developers and address any remaining questions about the program.

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**A District-Level Program Review Results in a Full Start**

Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) wanted to provide programming to help teachers with some of the teaching and learning challenges they were experiencing in their classrooms. These challenges had not been resolved with classroom management programs or professional learning opportunities to improve instruction. People were saying: “We need to do something.”

A year-long exploration began when the district-level team, called “Humanware,” reviewed listings from CASEL about evidence-based SEL programs. The team convened a work group of internal and external agency partners to learn more about the programs. It included administrators, school psychologists, special education staff, union representatives, social workers, and school-based mental health agency workers.

The work group made an important decision early on. They wanted to start off implementing SEL programming in the youngest grades and then gradually move up through the grade levels. Each member of the work group studied one of the listed programs by using a set of criteria the work group developed. The criteria included grade level(s) the program could serve, costs, strength of research behind the program, intensity of the training model, and any other strengths/weaknesses the group found relevant.

Over the course of many meetings the work group shared and compared summaries of each program. The list was narrowed to two by removing programs that did not address district priorities.
The work group contacted other schools and districts that were using one of the programs. They gathered information about challenges and successes of each program and results it had shown. This helped to shorten the list of program choices to one program.

Before finalizing their decision, the work group invited a representative of their top choice to explain the program more thoroughly and respond to the group’s remaining questions. After the visit the work group made its choice and informed the district’s decision-makers. They agreed to identify funding so the program could be implemented for all schools in the district. CMSD says the program, now serving grades Pre-K-6, has served them well.

Complete the selection process

If the SEL team used Tool 4.3: Reviewing Evidence-Based SEL Programs as a way to organize information about the SEL programs under consideration, the worksheets for each program can be used to make an selection. The worksheets could be shared with the school community and discussed during a staff meeting or department or grade-level meeting. Together the school community can make a collaborative decision about the program or programs that best fit their goals, priorities, and available resources.

What Are Some Considerations for Initial Professional Learning for the Adopted Evidence-Based Program?

As with any educational innovation, school staff participate in professional learning to develop or enhance the skills and knowledge they need to deliver high-quality SEL. Some programs offer professional learning that focuses on the content and delivery of program materials. Others offer broader opportunities that aim to increase educators’ depth of understanding and familiarity with a variety of effective teaching methods.

Knowing how comprehensive a program’s learning model is and whether it fits within the school’s professional learning calendar can help ensure that a program is right for a school. A useful list of professional learning components include:

• Length: half-day, full day, multiple days.
• Timing and sequencing: all professional learning delivered at the outset or staggered throughout the SEL effort with ongoing follow-up support.
• Mode of delivery: face-to-face workshops, Internet-based.
• Adult learning methods used: modeling and role plays, cascading.

It is also helpful to ask program providers if they offer coaching support or training for coaches. Coaches are individuals with relevant expertise who provide individualized support to school staff after the initial professional learning events. Coaches can encourage accurate and sustained implementation of new teaching behaviors and counter the isolation that often occurs after staff begin to implement new practices. Effective coaching strategies include:

• Describing and modeling specific instructional skills followed by opportunities for staff to practice these new skills and receive feedback.
• Direct observation of teachers in classroom settings followed by feedback on their performance.\textsuperscript{13, 16}
• Helping staff self-reflect about their use of new teaching practices.\textsuperscript{13, 15}
• Goal setting and goal review.\textsuperscript{13, 16}
• Ongoing planning for specific problems such as what to do when students have challenges using skills or how to balance the program with competing demands.\textsuperscript{13, 16}

Traditional one day in-service workshops with limited follow-up support do not lead to lasting changes in teaching practice.\textsuperscript{15, 17, 18} For example, Joyce and Showers'\textsuperscript{12} review of teacher professional learning reported that when training was supplemented with ongoing support, 95% of teachers applied the knowledge and skills they had developed in the classroom, compared to only 5% for those who received initial training alone. This is why we strongly recommend ongoing support and coaching as part of the school’s professional learning model for SEL.

The importance of implementing evidence-based programs with fidelity

Implementing SEL programs with fidelity is a key factor in their success.\textsuperscript{1, 19-22} Fidelity is defined as the extent to which school staff implement an SEL program as intended by the program’s developers.\textsuperscript{23} Implementing with fidelity depends heavily on the availability of high-quality professional learning and ongoing support. If staff members do not have consistent professional learning, they may deliver the program with low fidelity and leave students with a limited experience.

Embed learning events for the selected evidence-based SEL program into the existing professional learning schedule

Professional learning for the selected evidence-based SEL program(s) will most likely be incorporated into the overall approach to professional learning for SEL described in Chapter 3. Because of this, it is important to think carefully about how the evidence-based program will dovetail with and enhance current SEL professional learning activities.

One worthwhile approach is to have the program developer conduct the initial professional learning events. The SEL team can work with the program developer and school administrators to schedule these events. Ideally, staff will have advance opportunities to get acquainted with the new program and review the materials.

Effective professional learning occurs in increments to provide time for practice. Also consider “booster” sessions to reinforce the concepts from previous sessions and provide opportunities for the school community to learn from each other and explore new strategies. Booster sessions can help ensure that understanding of the program continues to deepen and that staff stay on track. These sessions can be particularly useful for those who may not have been completely comfortable with the program at first.

Managing the cost of professional learning

Professional learning for an evidence-based program can be expensive, especially when coaches are involved. It will likely be the most costly aspect of schoolwide SEL, but it is also one of the most important.
Various cost-saving strategies include:

- Sending teams to professional learning sessions for a “Training-of-Trainers” or certification process that prepares them to facilitate professional learning events with the school community.
- Aligning and embedding professional learning within the curriculum and budget cycle.
- Utilizing online professional learning methods.
- Identifying and pursuing state and federal funding sources such as Titles I, II, and III.

**Tool 4.4: Planning for Professional Learning on Evidence-based Programs** can be used as a template. The tool includes questions the SEL team can consider to ensure high-quality professional learning for SEL. It also contains an example of a professional learning plan.

### Selecting staff for professional learning

The question of who will participate in initial professional learning activities depends on the structure for rolling out the evidence-based program. Funding, staff time, and availability of space are other factors that will help determine decisions about who participates initially.

In situations where the program will be launched at just one grade level or only in a few selected classrooms, it may be preferable to work with only those teachers who will be using the program at the outset. Others can be included in subsequent professional learning events when the school is ready to scale up the SEL effort. In these instances schools might select one or more teachers in each grade to take part in a series of off-site professional learning sessions. After participating in the event they can then inspire their colleagues to help generate buy-in.

Another option, which can be beneficial both financially and programmatically, is to work with all teachers at the outset even if they won’t be using the program right away. This would allow everyone to become familiar with SEL and try out some strategies before fully launching the program in all classrooms.

A third option is to include members from the broader school community—custodians, administrative assistants, bus drivers, and family members—in the initial program workshop. When these school community members understand the basic concepts and philosophy of the program, it establishes a consistent framework and vocabulary for schoolwide SEL. A potential disadvantage is that it could be expensive and difficult to manage.

### Develop a plan for implementation

Once the evidence-based SEL program or programs have been selected, a helpful follow-up activity is to develop a plan for implementation. The SEL Leadership Team can use **Tool 1.2: Developing a Schoolwide Implementation Plan** to get started incorporating professional learning events into the existing plan. It may make sense to start with a modest effort and build on solid success. For example, a school might decide to pilot a program in one grade level before implementing it schoolwide.

A long-range plan for professional learning activities often includes expanding participation to involve every person in the school who comes in contact with students, including families, paraprofessionals,
support staff, secretaries, the cafeteria staff, custodians, and other nonteaching staff. The plan could also list the ongoing strategies that will support implementation. Examples include observation and feedback to teachers by program staff, regular meetings in which teachers can discuss challenges and successes they have experienced with the program, and peer coaching by teachers who are experienced with the program.

The cycle of practice, collaboration, and reflection

After the program is launched, teachers will get a better feel for what evidence-based SEL looks like in practice. They will also gain familiarity with program materials and other forms of support, including the amount of time it takes to deliver the content and how students respond. At this point teachers can be asked to provide feedback and reflect on successes and challenges they are experiencing with the program. Making adjustments based on these reflections is an important way to support teachers and strive for high-quality implementation.

Examples of reflection include:

- Incorporating reflections and stories into regular staff meetings and other staff gatherings.
- Structured staff gatherings during the school day or after hours to develop and share successful lessons and strategies.
- Written surveys about program operations, logistics, schedules, and related factors.
Key things to remember

- When choosing evidence-based programs, it is critically important to align the programs with the school’s goals for schoolwide SEL, available resources, and identified needs for school improvement and cultural relevance.

- The SEL team should engage in a thoughtful process of reviewing programs in order to narrow the choices.

- Ideally members of the SEL team will have an opportunity to experience the evidence-based programs under consideration first-hand through direct observation of the programs in action or careful review of the program materials and information.

- The “SELect” criteria can be used when considering which evidence-based program(s) to adopt as part of a schoolwide systemic SEL implementation effort.

- Effective professional learning considerations include planning a variety of approaches, support from program provider(s), time allocation, participants, practice opportunities, and cost.
References


Chapter 5 - Integrate SEL into the Core Functioning of the School

Visionary principals know that curricula alone do not produce learning in children. They challenge teachers to take the tenets of SEL and apply them throughout all aspects of the school day. They weave SEL skills into academics, group work, lunchrooms, physical education, and into the way classroom management takes place.
— Bencivenga and Elias, Leading Schools of Excellence in Academics, Character, and Social-Emotional Development

Chapter Topics

- Why is it Important to Integrate SEL into the Core Functioning of the School?
- What Does It Mean to Integrate SEL into the Core Functioning of the School?
- How Do the Three Levels of Schoolwide SEL Provide a Framework for Integrating SEL?
- How Can SEL Be Integrated into Curriculum and Instruction?
- How Can Schoolwide Practices and Policies Be Aligned with SEL?
- What Are Ways to Partner with Families and Community Agencies to Extend SEL Beyond the School?

Tools
5.1: Integrating Common Core State Standards and Social and Emotional Learning Standards Template
5.2: Leading, Developing, and Sustaining an SEL Climate
5.3: Partnering with Families
5.4: Partnering with the Broader Community

Why Is It Important to Integrate SEL into the Core Functioning of the School?

The goal of this chapter is to provide guidance on how to integrate SEL throughout the school in a coherent, coordinated way. When SEL is part of the core functioning of a school it is linked to academics, promoted in all social interactions, reinforced by daily routines and school structures, incorporated into policies, and aligned with the school’s mission for its students. This type of integration helps make SEL relevant, meaningful, and a part of everyday student behavior.

As reflected in the Schoolwide Planning and Implementation Rubric, fully integrated schoolwide SEL involves all adults in the school and promotes student SEL in classrooms, across the school building, and through partnerships with families and community agencies. These strategies can then be aligned with key structures and systems in the school such as student support services.

What Does it Mean to Integrate SEL into the Core Functioning of the School?

Every adult in a school can contribute to students’ social and emotional development. It is impossible to bring adults and youth together for long periods of time over the weeks and months of each school year and not influence these students’ competencies and the kind of person they are becoming. Although this may already be happening in the school, often it is informal and haphazard rather than planned and intentional. When adults’ efforts are aligned with a common approach, however, and when students are
given consistent and ongoing opportunities to practice the skills they are learning throughout the school and not just in classrooms, these skills become internalized and more likely to be put into practice in real-life situations.³

Up to this point in this Guide process, SEL Leadership Teams have been guiding the selection and adoption of an evidence-based SEL program that fits with the school community. It is assumed that even teams who entered this process “midstream” and did not complete all the key activities that preceded this chapter will have an approach to schoolwide SEL that they can further integrate throughout a school.

As described in Chapter 4, we strongly recommend the use of evidence-based SEL programs complemented by schoolwide programming. By integrating different strategies, schools can provide a comprehensive array of services for enhancing students’ social-emotional development.⁴ An evidence-based SEL program offers a foundation for SEL that can then be further embedded into daily practices.

Learning standards are also important when integrating SEL. Some schools using this Guide may already have state or district standards for social and emotional learning. Others might work with their central office to adopt SEL standards for use districtwide. If SEL-related learning standards are not available, the following web links provide SEL standards that align with CASEL’s five core competencies.

- Anchorage School District
- Austin Independent School District
- Oakland Unified School District
- Washoe County School District

An example of state SEL standards are the Illinois State Board of Education SEL standards for grades K-12.

**How Do the Three Levels of Schoolwide SEL Provide a Framework for Integrating SEL?**

A useful framework for integrating SEL across the school is the three levels of schoolwide SEL – in classrooms, throughout the building, and through partnerships with families and community agencies. Within these levels, the following strategies can be used to provide comprehensive, integrated schoolwide SEL.

1. SEL curriculum and instruction
2. Schoolwide practices and policies
3. Family and community partnerships

High quality integration would involve coordinated and aligned SEL strategies that operate within and among each setting level. The goal of this type of integration is to embed teaching and reinforcement of SEL skills, knowledge, and attitudes into daily interactions with students. SEL can provide a common language that students, educators, and school staff use when interacting with each other, and integrating SEL into all setting levels in a meaningful and sustained way promotes continuity and consistency.
This chapter can help the SEL team identify ways to coordinate and integrate SEL at each level. To begin we recommend reviewing **Tool 2.1: School Strengths Inventory** to get a good sense of programs and practices already underway. Integrating schoolwide SEL with pre-existing programming involves understanding how existing program philosophies, infrastructures, and routines could help or hinder SEL. The goal is to create synergy and a common understanding for SEL implementation.

What would a fully integrated approach to schoolwide SEL look like? The following description offers one example based on a composite of existing school situations.

### Fully Integrating SEL Schoolwide

This example of schoolwide SEL includes a coordinated array of strategies in classrooms, throughout the building, and through partnerships with families and community agencies.

At the classroom level the school has adopted an evidence-based SEL program that provides teachers with a curriculum for SEL skills and content instruction. The program includes instructional strategies that promote SEL to engage students and foster a supportive learning environment. Throughout class time students have opportunities to practice social and emotional skills with their peers while also learning about and developing respect for each other’s cultural backgrounds. The teachers continually reinforce this SEL content during instructional time. Their classroom management strategies minimize punitive consequences and encourage students to take responsibility for their behavior. This is done through the use of proactive, instructive, and restorative approaches to discipline. To gauge how well students are progressing, teachers use strengths-based approaches to assess student mastery of social-emotional concepts and skills that the evidence-based SEL program promotes.

Integrating SEL throughout the building involves all the adults in the school. They consciously model social and emotional competence throughout the day and cultivate positive relationships with each other and with students. The school’s evidence-based SEL program has helped to establish a common language and understanding about SEL. SEL concepts and key words are posted in classrooms and hallways throughout school. Clear norms and expectations for behavior, established through a collaborative process that included students, are also highly visible everywhere.

SEL is also coordinated with support services for students who need special attention or instruction to master SEL skills. In addition, SEL is acknowledged and integrated into a variety of school activities outside the classroom such as physical education, where teamwork and cooperation are emphasized, service-learning projects in which students are encouraged to consider the needs of others as they plan and work together, and school assemblies that celebrate “SEL Students of the Month.” All these schoolwide practices and policies help support classroom learning and foster a safe and supportive school climate.

The staff are united in welcoming and encouraging family and community involvement in the school. They provide regular opportunities for families to learn about the social-emotional concepts their children are learning in class and how they can reinforce this learning at home. Family-oriented events that highlight SEL skill development are a common occurrence, and staff regularly communicate about SEL to the students’ families through bulletins and emails.

Community agencies and representatives also receive a warm welcome at the school. Some of them provide supportive services at school for students and their families. Others offer enriching learning
activities in the community. Students who participate in these community-based learning experiences are regularly encouraged to demonstrate social and emotional competence in meaningful real-world settings.

How Can SEL Be Integrated into Curriculum and Instruction?

Promoting social and emotional development for all students in classrooms involves teaching and modeling social and emotional skills, providing opportunities for students to practice those skills, and giving them an opportunity to demonstrate mastery. The following sections encourage the SEL team to think about how to further integrate SEL into classrooms through:

- Explicit instruction of SEL skills, knowledge, and attitudes
- Instructional practices that promote SEL
- Culturally responsive teaching

Explicit instruction of social and emotional skills, knowledge, and attitudes

Explicit instruction of social and emotional skills, knowledge, and attitudes involves clearly defining what social and emotional competencies are and then directly teaching the concepts and skills that enable students to demonstrate these competencies.

As emphasized in Chapter 4, we encourage schools to adopt evidence-based SEL programs for this purpose. Such programs typically focus on knowledge, skills, and attitudes that can be broadly applied to a variety of situations, such as making friends, working cooperatively with others, coping with stress, making decisions about risky behavior, resolving interpersonal conflicts, and learning anything new. Another curricular-based approach is to embed SEL instruction into content areas such as English language arts, social studies, or math.

SEL standards can also be helpful for integrating social and emotional learning into curriculum and instruction. Using SEL standards to guide curriculum development can make it more likely that social and emotional competencies will be taught, modeled, practiced, and reinforced across subject areas. By clearly specifying the skills they want to help students learn, teachers know which social-emotional competencies to include, where in the curriculum to include them, and how student social and emotional competence can be assessed. Involving all grade levels provides an opportunity for schools to sequence the curriculum developmentally so it builds on what students have been learning to promote SEL mastery.

SEL Lesson Plan

A subcommittee of teachers in District 102 in La Grange, Ill., spent a summer developing a series of lesson plans that combine SEL standards with academic content areas. Each lesson has both an academic goal and an SEL goal. These lessons are kept in the learning resource center and are available for teachers to borrow. They are listed by both the SEL skill they cover and their academic goal so teachers can find lessons to match their students’ needs. The lessons are particularly useful for new teachers who are still gaining an understanding of SEL and who may not be comfortable developing their own integrated lessons.
If schools do not have SEL standards available to them, they undoubtedly have access to other learning standards in their state and district. For example, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) have been adopted by most states and are intended to provide a consistent framework for preparing students for college and the workforce. Embedded in CCSS is the assumption that students will develop a broad range of skills that include cognitive, affective, and behavioral competencies.

To be successful in fulfilling the CCSS requirements, students must be able to:

- Reflect on the meaning of their own learning.
- Manage their personal resources to achieve goals.
- Work collaboratively and cooperatively with others on collective tasks.
- Participate in relationship-centered learning activities that involve engagement and language skills.
- Use problem-solving and decision-making skills to complete higher-order tasks.

Although SEL is foundational to CCSS, the connections are implicit and not always immediately apparent. As a result, developing curriculum using CCSS and SEL standards requires a process of analysis and alignment.

Tool 5.1: Integrating Common Core State Standards and Social and Emotional Learning Standards Template

provides a framework the SEL team can use to help integrate SEL standards with CCSS. The tool consists of sample activities to promote a positive school climate, model SEL competencies, and create a positive learning environment, including a rating scale to assess how frequently the school is currently doing these activities.

Another example of integrating SEL with CCSS comes from the Washoe County School District in Nevada. Through their involvement in the process teachers developed a deep understanding and articulation of the essential role SEL competencies play in the instructional methods required by CCSS.

SEL and Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

One of the professional learning activities in the Washoe County School District engaged teachers in exploring the integration of SEL and CCSS. The three-day workshop began by focusing on two of the instructional shifts needed to implement the standards in English Language Arts. These shifts require curricular materials and classroom instruction that teach the close reading of complex texts and use of evidence to answer text-dependent questions.

The teachers were encouraged to explore and practice using SEL strategies during close reading time with their students and report back on the results. The culminating activity for the workshop called for participants to write a letter to a district or community stakeholder explaining why SEL is necessary for all students to be more successful in meeting the CCSS. Most teachers stayed long after the session’s scheduled conclusion to finish writing and discussing their letters.

The activity energized the teachers and gave them a voice in advocating for SEL in their district. Afterwards the district’s SEL staff used excerpts from the letters when sharing information with administrators and other district leaders about the ongoing efforts to integrate SEL with the CCSS.
Instructional practices that promote SEL

Curricular approaches to SEL can be very effective and ensure a scope and sequence if they are implemented well. However teachers can naturally foster skills and cultivate positive attitudes in students through instructional practices. These practices emphasize how to teach rather than what to teach, and they are beneficial because they can be used in any subject area. Compared to explicit instruction, this approach to promoting social-emotional development is less direct and focuses on changing teacher practices.

Instructional practices support SEL in classrooms when they promote positive learning environments, enable teachers to model social-emotional competencies, and encourage student engagement to enhance academic learning. Such practices are often described as “student-centered.” The teacher is less of a “sage on the stage” and more a “guide by the side.”

Some evidence-based SEL programs build teachers’ capacity to incorporate student-centered approaches, inquiry-based approaches, collaborative and cooperative learning, project-based learning, higher-order thinking, and reflective practices. Examples of such instructional practices include:

- Interactive approaches such as brainstorming, discussion, games, role plays, and problem-solving.
- Cooperative and collaborative learning activities that use teamwork to provide students with practice in getting along with others and working together toward common goals.
- Reflection strategies that help students explore the meaning of what they are learning.

Instructional practices that require students to work and learn together, discuss a topic and collect different points of view, solve a math or science problem in a small group, or make choices about their own learning are all activities that ask students to use and practice social and emotional skills.

Tool 3.1: Developing Awareness of Instructional Strategies that Promote SEL, introduced in Chapter 3, provides a checklist for assessing relevant teacher behaviors. The tool is designed to help teachers think about instructional strategies that create a relationship-centered classroom that nurtures and supports SEL. It can be used by individual teachers to identify personal strengths or by a group of teachers to support each other in trying new practices. However it is used, the tool is for personal reflection and not for evaluation.

Cultural responsiveness. Also important are culturally responsive teaching approaches. Schools today are being asked to serve an increasingly diverse student population. Expectations of students’ appropriate social and emotional competencies are culturally influenced, both for the students and the teacher. It has been well-documented that teachers’ attitudes, beliefs, and unconscious biases influence the teaching and learning process.

Culturally responsive teaching has been defined as using the cultural characteristics, experiences, and perspectives of ethnically diverse students as a means for teaching them more effectively. This definition is based on the assumption that when academic knowledge and skills are relevant to students’ everyday experiences and frames of reference, they are more personally meaningful, have higher interest and appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly.
Sue and Sue describe three themes that can be used as a framework to enhance teachers’ cultural responsiveness: multicultural awareness, multicultural knowledge, and multicultural skills.

- Developing *multicultural awareness* requires a teacher to increase awareness of his/her own biases and assumptions about the behavior of students.
- *Multicultural knowledge* refers to acquiring knowledge of the particular students with whom teachers and other school staff work with. We recommend that teachers actively try to learn about each of their students’ cultural backgrounds, including values they have that help shape the ways the deal with feelings, conflict, social interactions, social norms, and their individual learning styles.
- *Multicultural skills* are culturally appropriate strategies for working with students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Teachers who employ such skills create classroom communities where diverse students respect and support one another. Differences are discussed and valued, and cultural conflicts are viewed as opportunities for learning.

The following Web links offer additional resources and information about cultural responsiveness.

- National Association of School Psychologists
- National Center for Cultural Competence
- National Equity Project
- WestEd Culture and Language in Education Project

*Identifying instructional practices to promote SEL.* Many SEL experts believe that SEL is essentially a way to describe excellent teaching. Several resources describe high-quality teaching and can be reviewed to glean practices from them. They include teaching frameworks and a practitioner-oriented brief that describes various instructional practices.

*Teaching frameworks.* Most districts have teaching frameworks that define their view of what great teaching looks like. In the absence of an evidence-based SEL program, frameworks like this could be helpful. A widely used teaching framework is Charlotte Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching.* It describes research-based best practices focused on four domains. Each domain is made up of multiple components, and two of the domains—Classroom Environment and Instruction—identify instructional practices that can support SEL. These domains are described in a rubric that can be accessed at no cost.

Other teaching frameworks that are helpful to examine include:

- Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)
- Marzano’s Observational Protocol
- Research for Better Teaching

*The Center on Great Teachers and Leaders research-to-practice brief.* A brief titled *Teaching the Whole Child: Instructional Practices That Support Social-Emotional Learning* provides an overview of ten teaching practices that promote SEL. The SEL team can use this free online resource to identify instructional practices that complement their selected approach.
How Can Schoolwide Practices and Policies Be Aligned with SEL?

Schoolwide practices and policies can either promote or hinder SEL. They include practices and policies related to school climate, student support services, discipline, initiatives like bullying prevention, and tiered models of support such as positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS) and responsiveness-to-intervention (RTI).

In this chapter we look at several building-level strategies that have significant potential for promoting and supporting SEL:

- Practices that build a safe and supportive climate
- Schoolwide policies and practices
- Integrating SEL with student support services
- Incorporating SEL into after-school activities

Practices that build a safe and supportive climate

All the adults in a school can help model and promote SEL. Marcus Garvey School in the Chicago Public Schools offers one example. The school has made SEL the foundation of its philosophy and practice.

Establishing an SEL School

At Marcus Garvey School in Chicago SEL is visible from the moment a visitor enters the building. Students are celebrated in every common area and in every classroom. Photos of all students, along with their goals for career and life, hang in the cafeteria. The language of SEL is on display throughout the building, with SEL competencies posted in the hallways and displays of student work on bulletin boards.

Each classroom has an inviting Peace Center. These are areas where students can go to calm down and practice their self-management skills if they are facing a challenging moment. On Monday mornings you will see Garvey mentoring groups in which every adult in the building works with a small group of students. These groups meet to discuss issues in the students’ lives, set and monitor goals each student has established, and continue strengthening social-emotional skills and building relationships.

Garvey is implementing an evidence-based SEL program to develop students’ social-emotional skills and positive attitudes, and school leaders make sure that teachers reinforce those skills in their lesson plans throughout the week.

When implemented effectively, building-level strategies can promote a positive school culture and climate. Although these two terms are sometimes used interchangeably, they are not synonymous.

*School culture* refers to the shared assumptions, beliefs, or values in a school. It also refers to the school’s traditions.

*School climate* refers to the quality and character of school life and is based on patterns of students’, families’, and school personnel’s experience of school life. Climate relates to the school’s infrastructure, its social composition, and its cohesiveness. It is also determined by
the quality of relationships, the teaching and learning that takes place, collaboration between teachers and administrative staff, and the level of administrative support.22

A positive, accepting school climate helps to foster school connectedness—the belief among students that adults care about their learning and about them. According to the National School Climate Council23, a positive school climate includes the following characteristics:

- The school has clear norms, values, and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally, and physically safe.
- All members of the school community are engaged and respected.
- Students, families, and educators work together to develop and contribute to a shared school vision.
- Educators model and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning.
- Each person contributes to the operations of the school and the care of the physical environment.

### Establishing an SEL Culture and Climate

At JE Moss Elementary School in the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, the vision is to become a learning community that maximizes the potential of every student, a commitment that led the school to embrace social and emotional learning. One of the first priorities was to create a professional learning committee for SEL to plan professional learning events, model social and emotional competencies for colleagues, and solicit buy-in from stakeholders.

Since committing to schoolwide SEL the school has seen an overall increase in its positive culture and climate. More than 25 different languages are represented at the school, and approximately 45% of the students are English language learners. SEL-infused instruction has helped to increase students’ motivation to learn through more engaging and relevant instructional practices. It has also allowed the teachers to focus on student academics and language acquisition. Students at Moss have increased opportunities to engage in meaningful interaction and dialogue with both peers and adults.

#### Tool 5.2: Leading, Developing, and Sustaining an SEL Climate

Includes a list of ideas and a rating scale to reflect how frequently the school is implementing activities that promote a positive school climate and the extent to which adults are modeling SEL throughout the school day. It also provides ideas and a rating scale for assessing the implementation of activities that sustain a positive learning climate.

Many evidence-based SEL programs incorporate schoolwide practices that are designed to foster a positive and supportive school climate. The SEL team can review **Tool 2.1: School Strengths Inventory** to get a quick overview of what the school already has in place to accomplish this.

The following section provides some suggestions of how these schools could further embed climate-building strategies at the building level by discussing three research-based strategies: establishing shared norms and rules, adults modeling social and emotionally competent behaviors and attitudes, and nurturing supportive relationships.
Establishing shared norms and rules. This commonly used practice for promoting a positive school climate can help the entire school community develop consistent expectations for adult and student behavior. Ideally students will be able to participate in the norm-setting process. This is especially important for middle and high school students. When students participate they are more likely to view the norms as fair. The adults can ensure the norms are positively framed and create high expectations for everyone.

In an ideal form, shared norms and rules would provide a clear description of ideal behaviors and attitudes that promote a positive school climate. They would be broad and general enough so they could be applied across a variety of circumstances. Also, they would be concise – for example three to five – since it would be harder to remember a long list of complicated rules.

Adults modeling SEL competencies. Because they are socially oriented institutions schools are a logical place to demonstrate patience, empathy, and positive communication. The adults in the school can make a commitment to behave in a socially and emotionally competent way and thus demonstrate the skills, attitudes, and dispositions they expect of their students.

Ideally all staff will have opportunities to model SEL. To ensure a coherent, unified approach noncertified staff should also be involved. Discussions or presentations about SEL practices or experiences could become a routine part of staff meetings, department meetings, and/or grade-level and team meetings.

Cultivating positive and supportive relationships with students. The power of positive and supportive relationships in a school cannot be overstated. When socially and emotionally competent school leaders build and maintain positive and trusting relationships among members of the school community, this enables them to have a positive impact on the school’s climate and culture and ultimately on student engagement and achievement. Jennings and Greenberg describe socially and emotionally competent teachers as those who:

- Develop supportive and encouraging relationships with students.
- Act as a role model for respectful and appropriate communication.
- Design lessons that build on student strengths and abilities.
- Establish and implement behavioral guidelines that promote motivation driven by student interest and enjoyment instead of using external incentives such as rewards and punishment.
- Coach students through conflicts.
- Encourage cooperation among students.

A growing body of evidence indicates that supportive teacher-student relationships play an important role in a positive school and classroom climate, students’ connection to school, and desired academic, social, and emotional student outcomes. Studies indicate that these relationships can relate to increases in engagement, learning, and motivation.

The quality of teacher-student relationships is especially important for younger students. Poor relationships with teachers in elementary school can lead to a lasting dislike and fear of school associated with later antisocial behaviors and academic failure. Relationships are important for students at the secondary level as well. For example, perceived support from teachers for students in
middle and high school can reduce the risk of adolescent social problems and academic failure while helping students behave in more prosocial ways.\textsuperscript{26, 28, 29}

Schoolwide policies and practices

Schoolwide policies and practices can be reviewed and reframed through an SEL “lens” to focus on strengths and assets. In this section we look at how SEL can be incorporated into school improvement priorities, discipline and bullying prevention policies, and teacher recruitment.

**Aligning SEL with school improvement.** Including SEL goals in the school improvement plan is a direct way to integrate SEL schoolwide. For example, an SEL goal might relate to establishing a caring, supportive school climate, which can be measured through a climate survey. Another component of the plan might relate to staff developing and modeling SEL skills that can be measured through individual staff evaluations, observing interactions in the classroom, or having staff set personal, measurable goals.

**Aligning SEL practices with discipline policies and practices.** Although schools have little control over discipline policies that are set by their district or state, in many cases they can determine how to meet the requirements of those policies. Harsh discipline policies like “zero tolerance” that rely on exclusionary and punitive practices like suspensions and expulsions are not conducive to schoolwide SEL.

Instead of punitive approaches to discipline, the U.S. Department of Education has called for schools to identify developmentally appropriate consequences for problem behavior that are supportive and proportional, i.e., the severity of the consequences matches the severity of the behavior violation.\textsuperscript{30} Supportive discipline practices encourage students to learn and develop essential skills, identify problems, think of alternative ways to solve problems, evaluate solutions, and make better decisions. These practices can go hand-in-hand with the promotion of social and emotional skills, knowledge, and attitudes.

One widely recognized example of a supportive approach to discipline is restorative justice. Restorative justice seeks to promote belongingness and is grounded in the premise that students thrive when they are socially engaged.\textsuperscript{31, 32} Morrison\textsuperscript{33} explains that these practices often focus on:

- **Restitution** to repair any harm that was done.
- **Resolution** to ensure that any conflict is resolved among those involved so the likelihood of future harm is reduced.
- **Reconciliation** to facilitate emotional healing and to reestablish positive relationships.

Restorative practices require a significant shift from a rules-based approach to a relationship-based approach, from social control to nurturing social engagement and self-responsibility.\textsuperscript{34-36}

We recommend that a committee comprised of staff, students, and families be established to review the school’s discipline policy and practices to see if they could be better aligned with SEL. This committee can develop a continuum of developmentally appropriate and proportional consequences for addressing student misbehavior.
Aligning SEL with bullying prevention policies. Bullying is still pervasive in schools despite extensive anti-bullying initiatives and policies in recent years. Research indicates that bullying cannot flourish in safe and caring learning environments characterized by:

- Supportive relationships between teachers and students and among students that encourage open communication and positive ways to resolve problems and conflicts.
- Good working relationships between schools and families that foster two-way communication about student growth and development.
- School norms, values, and policies that emphasize respect for others and appreciation of differences.
- Students who are taught to be aware of and can manage their emotions, demonstrate caring and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle challenging social situations constructively.\textsuperscript{37, 38}

Teaching the core competencies of SEL is a step toward a learning environment that discourages bullying. Schools can also develop bullying prevention policies that include a clear definition of bullying prevention and ways to report bullying, investigate reported cases of bullying, and respond appropriately.

For example, while schools should make clear that bullying is unacceptable, schools could also use the disciplinary process not just to hold those who bully accountable, but also to help those students learn from their behaviors. Explicitly teaching social and emotional skills, knowledge, and attitudes to students who bully could prevent future bullying.

A variety of resources for developing effective bullying prevention policies and practices can be found on the CASEL website. Also worth a look is the bullying prevention and intervention manual developed by the DuPage County Regional Office of Education and the Illinois State’s Attorney’s Office.

Integrating SEL with student support services

Student support services offer another way to integrate SEL. This can be achieved by creating or building upon an existing student support team focused on students with special needs. When student support personnel—school counselors, social workers, and school psychologists—know the topics and skills addressed through a school’s SEL programming and content, they can align them with their work with individual students. Because these staff members are typically the link between schools and community-based services they can extend SEL to these partnerships as well.

Many schools use tiered models of support to improve academic and behavioral outcomes. These multi-tiered models provide varying levels of academic and behavioral support to all students based on their needs and skill levels.

Tier I consists of supports for all students. These are referred to as “universal” since all students participate in them. For SEL, universal supports include lessons from evidence-based SEL programs integrated into the curriculum and schoolwide practices and programs that involve all students and staff.
Tier II consists of supports for students who are in need of additional instruction. Tier III is for students who require individualized instruction and focused attention. Social-emotional skills that students are learning in classrooms can be re-taught to students needing additional support in smaller settings such as specially designed small-group instruction and counseling interventions. These additional supports provide students with structured opportunities to practice the skills they are learning with specific feedback.

**Universal SEL Implementation**

“They’re shooting!” It was 1:00 in the afternoon after lunch at Success Tech High School in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD). The year was 2007. By the end of the day, a 14-year-old Success Tech student had shot and wounded two teachers and two students and then committed suicide, all at the school. The shooter had been on suspension because of an alleged bullying situation and had entered the school apparently targeting particular staff and students.

In response to the outcry, CMSD increased security staff and installed “Hardware” (metal detectors) as an immediate reaction. As a long-term solution, however, a new “Humanware” team was charged with developing an approach to preventing school violence, promoting mental wellness, and building effective conditions for learning. Collaboration became the hallmark of this school district and community as they learned to work together through a three-tiered approach.

Social and emotional learning (SEL) has become the universal Tier I approach for building a schoolwide foundation in support of positive discipline, academic success, and mental and emotional wellness. SEL happens in CMSD through the development of caring school communities teaching appropriate learning behaviors and problem-solving skills, providing positive behavioral support, developing social and emotional competence, and enhancing academic instruction with SEL methods and practices.

Various terms are used to describe a tiered model of support depending on whether the focus is on academic or behavioral outcomes. Response To Intervention (RTI) is often used to describe an academic tiered model, whereas Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) refers to a behavioral model.

PBIS and SEL are both rooted in the belief that students learn best in safe and well-managed learning environments. However PBIS and SEL have different primary aims and emphasize different strategies and techniques. PBIS focuses on the adult management of student behavior. In contrast, the SEL approach is to develop social and emotional competencies so students are motivated and able to manage their own behavior. 39

If a school already has a PBIS structure in place, student-centered SEL strategies and techniques could be integrated with it. SEL could be used to build skills, knowledge, and attitudes that can be linked to the behavioral expectations of PBIS. SEL can also help to engage students in discussing these expectations, why they are important for a safe school community, and how to link the behavioral expectations to SEL classroom instruction.
Incorporating SEL into after-school and extended day activities

After-school programs can provide a safe and structured environment, filling a need to have organized activities for children outside of school hours. Since SEL-related programs that are held after school can complement what is taught during the school day we recommend that, as much as possible, after-school programs be integrated with the school’s SEL activities. When after-school program staff maintain communication with school administrators and teachers this will help to establish a common vocabulary and shared practices for SEL.

The positive effects of after-school programs on children’s social and emotional development are well-documented. Durlak and colleagues found that after-school program participants had significantly increased positive feelings and attitudes about themselves and their school and an increase in positive social behaviors. They also found significantly reduced problem behaviors and significant improvement in students’ performance on achievement tests and school grades among after-school participants exposed to SEL.

After-school programs that demonstrated the most positive outcomes for participants meet CASEL’s SAFE criteria. That is, they use a Sequenced and coordinated set of activities to develop SEL skills, Active learning to help youth learn these skills, are Focused and devote at least one program component to social and emotional skill development, and Explicitly target such skills. Consider including after-school program leaders on the SEL team.

What Are Ways to Partner with Families and Community Agencies to Extend SEL Beyond the School?

Schools do not function in a vacuum. The success of their students depends on the families that raise them and the community that surrounds them. Families can help support SEL at home and extend learning into the home and community. Community partners and organizations extend the reach of SEL by supporting and sustaining classroom and school efforts and by providing students with additional opportunities for SEL. Therefore, activities and policies that actively cultivate school-family-community partnerships are an important element in the integration of SEL schoolwide.

Engaging and supporting family partnerships

Partnerships between families and schools have been associated with a range of positive student outcomes including improved attendance, higher rates of homework completion, higher grades and test scores, and higher rates of school completion.

**Tool 5.3: Partnering with Families** is designed to guide the SEL team in identifying ways to build relationships with families to ensure integration of SEL at school and in each student’s home.

Parents and families can be involved in many ways. These include informational meetings, workshops, discussion groups related to SEL or student progress on SEL goals, and approaches to reinforcing SEL competencies at home. Interactive homework assignments and activities can also be provided to familiarize families with concepts being taught at school and to encourage parent-child dialogue.
Including opportunities for families to be actively involved in their student’s education is another approach. For example, families might be invited to visit and volunteer in the classroom to observe how SEL lessons are taught. At the secondary level, family-student advisory groups or clubs can be established. Communicating with families through online SEL-related newsletters that share updates and tips to complement SEL lessons at home is another option.

Family involvement can have a positive impact on the adults in a school community as well. For example, highly involved family members can be strong advocates for reforms at the district level. Parents who are knowledgeable about a school’s SEL programming can help explain it when others in the school community have questions or concerns. Family members themselves can benefit by gaining access to new resources, developing a sense of accomplishment, learning new skills, and building a network of support.47

Cultural responsiveness is a critical consideration in promoting family partnerships. Awareness of the cultures represented in the school and the particular style of communication in each culture helps to engage families and all members of the school community in ways with which they are comfortable. The vignette below describes a strategy that was successfully used in the Oakland Unified School District to create meaningful partnerships with families.

Partnering with Families to Extend SEL throughout a School Community

The Oakland Unified School District’s Social Emotional Learning and Meaningful Family Engagement Departments partnered to sponsor a three-day SEL workshop for families and their school-site partners. The two-part program resulted in site-based training teams of families and school liaisons who will provide an introduction to SEL for their school communities. All materials were offered in Spanish and English, and the entire activity had simultaneous translation, honoring the critical need for every participant’s input to be heard and valued.

One grandmother who is raising her deceased son’s child shared the following: “Self-Management – I’ve never heard about that, calling it that. That might have really helped my son. People always talk about self-improvement, but being responsible for yourself, managing yourself, I’m going to use that....”

Having specific language and engaging ideas based on SEL skills and competencies contributed to a transformative experience. Honoring participants’ cultural backgrounds led to understanding and empowerment.

Engaging and supporting partnerships with the broader community

Beyond partnering with families, it is also valuable to establish links between the school and the broader community. This can be accomplished in many ways. Examples include:

- Reach out to community agencies that work with and assist families. When families are supported, they are better able to focus on their children’s education and well-being.
- Involve students in community mentoring and service-learning activities where they can apply and develop their social and emotional competencies.
- Establish partnerships with local media that are willing to broadcast or publish student work.
**Tool 5.4: Partnering with the Broader Community** lists strategies for linking with and involving local community organizations and stakeholders. After reviewing the ideas listed in the first part of the tool and taking stock of what the school is already doing, the SEL team can use this tool to identify ways to enhance community engagement to promote SEL.

**Key things to remember**

- When SEL becomes a framework for the school community, all adults use a common vocabulary and help students practice their social and emotional skills, knowledge, and attitudes in a caring, supportive, and well-managed learning environment.

- SEL can be effectively integrated into three different levels:
  - Classrooms
  - Across the school building
  - With families and community agencies

- SEL extends into every aspect of school life, impacting positive school climate and culture, schoolwide initiatives, student support services, schoolwide policies, school improvement planning, and family and community engagement.

- Community and family involvement is a critically important component of effective SEL implementation. School and community organizations need to be knowledgeable about and involved in supporting SEL through the community.
References


Chapter 6 - Use Data and a Cycle of Inquiry to Improve SEL Practice and Student Outcomes

When data are closely aligned to the goals of resolute leadership, subject to the discipline of the change process, and processed through collaboration, they are not just end measures — they are part and parcel of knowing and getting success. Good data must be treated fundamentally as central to strategy and not just seen as an accountability measure.
—Michael Fullan, Change Leader

Chapter topics

- How Can Data Be Used to Inform a Cycle of Inquiry?
- What Activities Are Involved in a Cycle of Inquiry?
- What Should We Do Next?

Tools

Tool 6.1: Learning from Process Data
Tool 6.2: Learning from Outcome Data
Tool 6.3: Learning from Data as a Team

Why is it Important to Use a Cycle of Inquiry to Improve SEL Practice and Student Outcomes?

This chapter introduces a structure for reflection that can help schools use data to drive continuous improvement focused on schoolwide SEL. Both process and outcome data are critical to this because schools need to know not only whether planned outcomes are being achieved but how to connect schoolwide SEL practices to those outcomes and to adjustments when necessary.

As reflected in the Schoolwide Planning and Implementation Rubric, we recommend that data related to student social and emotional competence be collected on a regular basis in order to monitor outcomes of schoolwide SEL. These data are most useful when incorporated into a process of reflection carried out by the SEL team and members of the school community working together. The findings can be shared with the broader school community and used to help enhance SEL practice.

How Can Data Be Used to Inform a Cycle of Inquiry?

Educators are faced with the reality that data can be used for both rewards and punishments. This is because data collected in schools are inextricably linked to accountability policies and requirements. Because of this, school leaders are faced with decisions about whether to use data merely to fulfill accountability requirements or to follow a path where school staff use data to better understand how the school community can succeed and thrive. We strongly recommend the latter approach since it offers opportunities for insight into the process of school improvement while at the same time fulfilling the need for data-driven accountability.
Schools can use data in many ways. For example, using data to track progress toward identified goals is a key to school improvement. Informing decisions about school programming and instruction with data is also a common approach. Objective information about students and the learning environment enables school staff to promote academic, social, and emotional competence. The process of reflection and inquiry should draw upon information from a variety of sources, both formal and informal, about what is happening throughout the school, what is helping or hindering progress, and what members of the school community think about schoolwide SEL.

In Chapter 1 we introduced a systematic reflection process called the cycle of inquiry. The cycle is guided by a series of critical questions (see Figure 5) that correspond with the major activities described in this Guide. If the SEL team has been working through the chapters and using the accompanying tools, they have already been engaging in a cycle of inquiry.

The previous chapters describe ways to build support for SEL and embed it into the school’s normal practices and routines. In this chapter the cycle of inquiry is extended into planning for future improvement and sustainability of schoolwide SEL. The inquiry process is a continuous effort to enhance learning in the school community by identifying, striving to address, and regularly revisiting important questions and issues. Using data to re-launch the cycle of inquiry promotes continuous improvement aligned with the key activities of CASEL’s School Theory of Action.

Figure 5. The Cycle of Inquiry for Schoolwide SEL
What Activities are Involved in a Cycle of Inquiry?

The cycle is intended to help schools address, investigate, and respond to issues that affect student learning. Progressing through the cycle provides opportunities for school staff to model social and emotional competence through reflection about current practice, goal setting and planning for success, consideration of multiple perspectives, and clear communication about progress – all in the service of making responsible decisions.

The cycle of inquiry activities described throughout Chapters 1-5 are summarized in Table 1. The rest of this chapter focuses on the key inquiry question that has yet to be considered: How will we use what we have learned to improve practice?

Table 1. Summary of Cycle of Inquiry Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where would we like to be?</th>
<th>Vision and Goals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry is characterized by deep reflection on what a school community hopes to achieve for its students, staff, families, and community members.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The inquiry approach is used to establish a vision and SMART goals that will guide schoolwide SEL.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A broad group of stakeholders – including the SEL team, school leaders and other school staff, families, students, and community members – participates in the inquiry process and contributes to establishing a vision and goals for schoolwide SEL.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Where are we now?</th>
<th>Assessing resources and needs</th>
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<tr>
<td>During the resources and needs assessment the SEL team takes stock of the school’s current resources for promoting academic, social, and emotional learning and any needs the school community wants to address.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understanding current resources and needs sheds light on where additional supports for schoolwide SEL might be needed.</td>
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<td>Data collected early in the inquiry process can serve as a baseline to help measure growth and change over time.</td>
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<tr>
<th>How will we get to where we want to be?</th>
<th>Planning for implementation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The SEL team develops an implementation plan that builds on current strengths and addresses unmet needs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The implementation plan can serve as a roadmap for how comprehensive SEL programming will be put into practice. For example, the school could adopt an evidence-based SEL program, and the plan would serve as a guide to implementing the program or aspects of the program schoolwide.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The plan includes strategies for supporting high-quality implementation through professional learning and integrating SEL into classrooms, throughout the school, and through family and community partnerships.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>How will we improve practice with what we have learned?</th>
<th>Process monitoring and outcome monitoring</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The SEL team monitors progress on the implementation plan. This allows the team to keep track of how well the process is going and whether additional support is needed.</td>
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<td>The school monitors desired outcomes to determine the extent to which planned improvements are being achieved.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The school community reflects on the process and outcome monitoring results to foster continuous improvement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The cycle of inquiry is revisited, and the school community adapts their efforts based on what they have been learning through this process.</td>
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</table>
Once schools have developed a schoolwide implementation plan with specific goals across the six key activities of CASEL’s School Theory of Action, the SEL team can revisit the plan and reflect on how well it is being put into practice. Reflection on what is going well and what needs to be adjusted can guide midcourse corrections while planned activities are still in progress. This reflection involves monitoring both process and outcome data.

**Process monitoring**

The first year of a new process or program in a school has been characterized as a time of “survival” when teachers are learning new skills and adjusting to many changes.\(^4\) Process monitoring can be used to guide and learn how the process is going. This is important because high-quality implementation is essential to achieving the best outcomes for students.\(^5,6\) Monitoring and checking the implementation process can also serve as a source of encouragement to school staff by reminding them that changes are being made and the school is progressing toward its vision for SEL. Process monitoring helps the school to understand why an SEL implementation effort did or did not have its intended effect.

SEL teams engage in process monitoring when they re-examine the **Schoolwide Implementation Rubric** and use those ratings to adjust **Tool 1.2: Schoolwide Implementation Plan**. If process monitoring indicates that SEL implementation tasks are not being completed as planned or the staff is experiencing difficulties with aspects of an evidence-based SEL program, the SEL team can work with staff to determine what’s getting in the way.

**Tool 6.1: Learning from Process Data** can help the SEL team get started with a process for monitoring implementation. The tool provides a way to decide how frequently to monitor implementation tasks, the person(s) responsible for monitoring them, and how the data will be organized and recorded. Process data can also help to monitor how effectively the school’s SEL strategies are being put in place. For example, if an evidence-based SEL program is being used in classrooms, the SEL team can assess teachers’ actual use of the program. This could consist of working with teachers to learn whether they are teaching the desired number of lessons and the quality of lesson implementation. Staff can compare strategies for improving their SEL practice through professional learning activities.\(^7\)

If the SEL team finds that teachers are having difficulty putting the evidence-based SEL program into practice as intended, they can dig deeper to find out what supports are needed. A quick survey or a brief discussion in a staff meeting could shed light on the issue. Perhaps teachers have not received adequate professional learning. Maybe they are struggling to fit the program content into their already packed instructional schedule. Whatever the case, process monitoring can help to improve program implementation.

**Outcome monitoring**

Process monitoring focuses on the extent to which an SEL effort is being implemented as intended. Outcome monitoring helps determine the extent to which planned outcomes are being achieved. For example, an outcome monitoring process could assess the degree to which students are using problem-solving skills to reduce classroom conflicts.
Schools that have used **Tool 2.6: Developing Goals for SEL Implementation** (see Chapter 2) to develop SMART goals have already identified how student and climate outcomes will be monitored, since measurement is one of the components of SMART goals. The components of SMART goals are:

- **Specific:** Does each goal clearly state what we want to accomplish and for whom? Where appropriate, does it specify where and by whom activities should be carried out?
- **Measurable:** Does our goal refer to measurable outcomes? Does it set a standard that will allow us to know whether or not we’ve met the goal?
- **Attainable:** Does the goal seem reasonable given where we are now?
- **Relevant:** Will attaining this goal make a difference in the quality of our students’ lives? Is this goal aligned with other goals we are pursuing?
- **Timely:** Have we established a timeframe for achievement of the goal? Do we need to set smaller, short-term goals as benchmarks along the way?

**Tool 6.2: Learning from Outcome Data** can help the SEL team get started with a process for monitoring student and climate outcomes. The tool provides guidelines for how to organize these types of data and describes typical outcome indicators for schoolwide SEL. It also supports SEL teams to share data with key stakeholders in the school community.

In doing outcome monitoring it is important to have tools that allow for comparisons of student behavior and school climate changes across time. In some cases schools will already have access to assessments of student social and emotional competencies and students’ perceptions of school climate. These types of assessments were discussed in **Tool 2.3: Assessing Student Social and Emotional Competencies** and **Tool 2.4: Measuring School Climate**. If your school has access to these types of data—for example, if the school collected it during an assessment of school resources and needs—outcome monitoring could be done by re-administering the same data collection procedures to see if any significant changes occurred.

Other types of information that could be reviewed to monitor outcomes include any data related to student academic achievement, attendance, and attitudes and beliefs related to school climate and culture. We recommend using SEL assessment tools that have been validated through rigorous research methods. We do not recommend creating new assessment tools for outcome measurements since they may not lead to stable results over time and could be misleading and inaccurate. Another way to incorporate and communicate assessment of student social and emotional competencies is to modify student report cards to include SEL.

Although outcome monitoring provides an opportunity to celebrate successes, it often takes a year or two before major changes in student outcomes can be documented. Changes in some student outcomes may occur earlier in the process. If students’ social and emotional competence does not show significant growth in the first year, measurable or observable changes may occur in teacher behavior and teaching practices, crucial steps toward improved outcomes for students.
What Should We Do Next?

Revisiting the cycle of inquiry

We recommend outcome monitoring by collecting much of the same data gathered for a resources and needs assessment. This allows schools to use their results to restart the cycle of inquiry. Data can provide a good sense of how SEL is promoted throughout a school. Data from process and outcome monitoring can also help to guide decisions about a school’s SEL implementation plan. Some questions to consider include:

- How did our outcomes compare to our goals?
- Why did (or didn’t) we achieve our goals?
- How should we proceed in order to continually improve programming, practices, and outcomes?

**Tool 6.3: Learning from Data as a Team** provides suggestions for how SEL teams can develop an approach to reflecting on outcome data. The tool suggests ways to engage the group in the reflection process and establish ground rules to ensure that the process is productive.

Following this period of reflection the cycle of inquiry continues. The SEL team may want to refine the process in light of new learning. By revisiting the question “Where do we want to go?” the SEL team has an opportunity to reinvest stakeholders in the vision for SEL and reconsider both the goals for schoolwide SEL and other school improvement goals. While revisiting the cycle of inquiry, the team may decide to set new goals and benchmarks for the upcoming year. Revisiting the cycle could lead to a revised action plan that aims to integrate SEL more deeply throughout the school.

The following vignette offers an example of the continuous improvement process used by the Washoe County School District.

**Continuous Improvement**

A Washoe County high school used an approach they call “Here’s What, So What, Now What” to examine their climate and culture data. The school did this to minimize staff anxiety levels, which tended to be high when areas needing improvement were identified.

To begin, the staff simply looked at the data and determined what it was telling them. The emphasis during this part of the process was on stating facts while reserving judgment.

Part two, the so what, gave them the opportunity to react and express their thoughts and feelings about the data. This was important because it allowed staff members to process the information and express ideas about underlying causes that might account for the results.

The final step, now what, gave the staff an opportunity to brainstorm and strategize ways to improve their school’s climate and culture for the future. Although this process created some uneasiness, the participants generated dozens of positive ideas for how they could improve their school’s climate and culture.
Key Things to Remember

- There are many different approaches to using data to improve the schoolwide SEL implementation process and student outcomes. Adopting a continuing cycle of inquiry is one approach to continuous improvement that builds on the processes described in Chapters 1-5. The cycle of inquiry is an ongoing process of questioning, assessing, and improving the school’s SEL implementation efforts.

- Process monitoring helps to assess how effectively SEL work is being implemented.

- Outcome monitoring answers questions about the impact of SEL on the participants, including students and teachers. These outcomes generally happen over time.

- The cycle of inquiry may require adjustments to the SEL implementation plan as it progresses. It will help identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas needing improvement.

- Although the SEL team and school leaders have the primary responsibility for leading the cycle of inquiry, engaging the entire school community will lead to greater understanding, support, and ownership.
References

Core Tool: Schoolwide Planning and Implementation Rubric

Purpose

This rubric is designed to assist SEL leadership teams in reflecting on their school’s progress toward planning and implementing SEL schoolwide.

How to use this tool

The rubric helps gauge progress by providing benchmarks indicating how far a school is on its way to supporting SEL for all students. The benchmarks are based on the six key activities of CASEL’s School Theory of Action:

1. Establish a vision for SEL.
2. Assess SEL-related resources and needs.
3. Embed professional learning for SEL.
4. Adopt evidenced-based SEL programs.
5. Integrate SEL into the core functioning of the school.
6. Use a cycle of inquiry to improve SEL practice and student outcomes.

The six key activities provide a framework for looking at the school’s infrastructure for supporting SEL activities, practices, and processes. Each key activity has different performance levels that range from a rating of 1 (initial planning and implementation have begun) to 4 (fully planned and implemented).

After reviewing the performance levels, the SEL leadership team can decide which best describes their school. After agreeing on which benchmark is most appropriate, they can document their status in the space at the top of each section marked Current Score. There is also room to include notes.

After completing the rubric the team will have a performance level rating for each of the key activities of the School Theory of Action. Once these ratings have been agreed upon, the SEL team can use this tool to facilitate discussions about where they are and where they want to go.

Discussions about the rubric can happen at multiple points in the implementation process. For example, if the rubric is used at the beginning of an SEL effort, the ratings can inform decisions about which aspects of schoolwide SEL the team wants to focus on as they start off. When used in tandem with Tool 1.2: Schoolwide Implementation Plan (see Chapter 1), the rubric can inform the planning process.

We recommend completing the rubric once at the beginning of the school year and again toward the end. Ratings from the beginning of the year can serve as a baseline. These can be compared to end-of-year ratings to monitor progress, highlight the year’s accomplishments, and identify priorities for the next school year.
1. Develop a **vision** that prioritizes academic, social, and emotional learning.

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<th>Current Score</th>
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### Performance Levels for Item 1

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<tr>
<td>Fully planned and implemented</td>
<td>Mostly planned and implemented</td>
<td>Partially planned and implemented</td>
<td>Initial planning and implementation have begun</td>
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<tr>
<td>- There is a vision for schoolwide SEL.</td>
<td>- There is a vision for schoolwide SEL.</td>
<td>- An SEL leadership team has been formed.</td>
<td>- School leaders are beginning to discuss the value of SEL with key members of the school community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- A wide range of relevant stakeholders (e.g., teachers, families, student support personnel, support staff, community members) helped develop the vision.</td>
<td>- The development process for the vision for schoolwide SEL involved a portion of relevant stakeholders.</td>
<td>- The SEL Team is planning a process to develop a vision for schoolwide SEL.</td>
<td>- An SEL team has begun to organize and take initial steps toward promoting SEL.</td>
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<td>- The SEL team has made a public commitment to implement the vision for schoolwide SEL as a priority for student learning.</td>
<td>- The SEL team has made a public commitment to implement the vision for SEL as a priority for student learning.</td>
<td>- Some but not all teachers and staff are aware of the vision for schoolwide SEL.</td>
<td>- Members of the school community are beginning to learn about SEL but are not yet aware of the vision for schoolwide SEL.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The majority of teachers and staff are aware of the vision for schoolwide SEL.</td>
<td>- Some but not all teachers and staff are aware of the vision for schoolwide SEL.</td>
<td>- School leaders demonstrate their commitment to SEL by modeling social and emotional competence in their interactions with others.</td>
<td>- Members of the school community are beginning to learn about SEL but are not yet aware of the vision for schoolwide SEL.</td>
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2. Conduct SEL-related **resources and needs assessment** to inform goals for schoolwide SEL.

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### Performance Levels for Item 2

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<tr>
<td>Fully planned and implemented</td>
<td>Mostly planned and implemented</td>
<td>Partially planned and implemented</td>
<td>Initial planning and implementation have begun</td>
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- The SEL team has conducted a resources and needs assessment of current strategies that support SEL in classrooms, throughout the school, and with families and community agencies.
- The school has plans to assess resources and needs regularly (every two years or less).
- The school collects data on student and climate outcomes related to SEL.
- Student outcome data informed the needs and resources assessment.
- Findings from the resources and needs assessment were shared with stakeholders as a way for them to participate in developing goals for schoolwide SEL.
- Goals for schoolwide SEL are included in key documents.

- The SEL team has conducted a resources and needs assessment of current strategies that support SEL in classrooms, throughout the school, and with families and community agencies.
- The SEL team has identified specific measures they will use to assess student and climate outcomes related to SEL.
- The school is in the process of sharing findings from the resources and needs assessment with stakeholders and gathering their input on goals for schoolwide SEL.
- Schoolwide SEL goals appear in some key documents (e.g., school improvement plan and strategic plan).

- The SEL team is in the process of conducting a resources and needs assessment of strategies that currently support SEL in classrooms, throughout the school, and with families and community agencies.
- The SEL team has identified specific measures they will use to assess student and climate outcomes related to SEL.
- The SEL team has begun to discuss possible goals for schoolwide SEL.

- The SEL team is planning a resources and needs assessment of current strategies that support SEL in classrooms, throughout the school, and with families and community agencies.
- The SEL team believes it is important to assess student social and emotional competence, behavior, and climate outcomes.
- Pockets of SEL implementation exist in the school but there are no specific goals for what coordinated, schoolwide SEL might achieve.
| (e.g., school improvement plan and strategic plan). |   |   |   |
3. Design and implement **effective professional learning programs** to build internal capacity for academic, social, and emotional learning.

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<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>Fully planned and implemented</th>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ The SEL team and other school leaders have participated in professional learning focused on basic SEL concepts and how to facilitate schoolwide SEL.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ Professional learning focused on basic SEL concepts is offered at least once a year to all staff as part of an in-service day.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ The majority of staff members have participated in professional learning focused on basic SEL concepts as well as other important topics that help them achieve the school’s goals for schoolwide SEL.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Teachers, administrators, and other instructional staff have participated in professional learning for the evidence-based SEL program that has been adopted.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ Ongoing support (e.g.,</td>
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<th>3</th>
<th>Mostly planned and implemented</th>
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<td>▪ The SEL team has participated in professional learning focused on basic SEL concepts and how to facilitate schoolwide SEL.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>▪ Professional learning focused on basic SEL concepts is offered at least once a year to all staff as part of an in-service day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ The majority of staff members have participated in professional learning focused on basic SEL concepts.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Teachers have participated in professional learning for the evidence-based SEL program that has been adopted.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ Professional learning communities incorporate learning about SEL as a topic and teachers support each other in strengthening their SEL practice.</td>
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<th>2</th>
<th>Partially planned and implemented</th>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ The SEL team has participated in professional learning focused on basic SEL concepts.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ SEL-related professional learning for teachers and other staff members is limited (e.g., SEL is occasionally included as part of staff meetings, teachers receive articles or readings about SEL).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ There is not yet any professional learning related to evidence-based SEL programs.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ The SEL team has begun to make plans for how to offer more extensive professional learning in SEL to members of the school staff.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>Initial planning and implementation have begun</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ School leaders and staff members have begun to discuss initial plans for professional learning focused on basic SEL concepts, but these learning events have not yet taken place.</td>
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observation with feedback, coaching) for implementing schoolwide SEL is provided.

- The SEL team has developed a sustainable plan for systematic professional learning related to SEL (e.g., professional learning communities, budget allocated to SEL, teachers provided with release time for SEL training, observing peers, coaches to support implementation).
4. Adopt and implement **evidence-based programs** for academic, social, and emotional learning across all grades.

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<tr>
<th>Performance Levels for Item 4</th>
<th>4: Fully planned and implemented</th>
<th>3: Mostly planned and implemented</th>
<th>2: Partially planned and implemented</th>
<th>1: Initial planning and implementation have begun</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notes</strong></td>
<td>The school has adopted evidence-based programs/approaches that foster a full range of social and emotional competencies for all students at all grade levels.</td>
<td>The school has adopted evidence-based SEL program/approach but it is being used only at some grade levels.</td>
<td>An evidence-based SEL program/approach has been adopted but implementation is in the early stages (e.g., being piloted in a subset of classrooms, low levels of implementation).</td>
<td>The school is in the process of adopting evidence-based programs/approaches for promoting students’ social and emotional competencies (e.g., reviewing materials, discussing options with peers, visiting schools).</td>
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<td><strong>Current Score</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Performance Levels</strong></td>
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5. **Integrate SEL** at all three levels of school functioning (curriculum and instruction; schoolwide practices and policies; family and community partnerships).

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<tr>
<td><strong>Fully planned and implemented</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mostly planned and implemented</strong></td>
<td><strong>Partially planned and implemented</strong></td>
<td><strong>Initial planning and implementation have begun</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Teachers are promoting SEL in the classroom.</td>
<td>▪ Teachers are promoting SEL in the classroom.</td>
<td>▪ SEL implementation has begun in classrooms (e.g., teachers are providing SEL skill instruction and/or using teaching practices that support SEL).</td>
<td>▪ The SEL team has identified ways to integrate SEL at the three setting levels within the school (classroom, schoolwide, and community) but has not yet shared these ideas with staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Classroom concepts are reinforced in multiple settings outside the classroom (e.g., language used by nonteaching staff, practices used in hallways or on the playground).</td>
<td>▪ Classroom concepts are reinforced in some settings outside the classroom (e.g., language used by nonteaching staff, practices used in hallways or on the playground).</td>
<td>▪ The SEL team has identified ways to integrate SEL at the three setting levels within the school (classroom, schoolwide, and community) and has shared these ideas with staff.</td>
<td>▪ The SEL team has identified ways to integrate SEL into the school’s policies and practices but has not yet shared these ideas with staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Adults are modeling SEL throughout the school.</td>
<td>▪ Classroom teachers and student support staff are discussing ways to integrate tier 2 and tier 3 services with SEL classroom instruction.</td>
<td>▪ Some policies and practices at the school level support student SEL (e.g., discipline guidelines).</td>
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<td>▪ Administrators manage the school in a way that fosters adult SEL (e.g., how meetings are run, the way decisions are made).</td>
<td>▪ Adults are beginning to model SEL in their interactions with one another and students.</td>
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<td>▪ Tier 2 and tier 3 services are aligned with SEL instruction that takes place in classrooms.</td>
<td>▪ Most policies and practices at the school level support student SEL (e.g., discipline guidelines).</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ All policies and practices at the school level support student SEL (e.g., discipline guidelines).</td>
<td>▪ The school communicates regularly with families and community partners about</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school communicates regularly with families about SEL.</td>
<td>SEL and how to support student SEL in the home and outside of school.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members are actively engaged in practices at the school that support student SEL (e.g., serve on or lead SEL-related committees, participate in SEL events, etc.).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school communicates with community partners regularly about SEL.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Community agencies provide services in the school related to SEL to students and their families.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Establish processes to **continuously improve** academic, social, and emotional learning through inquiry and data collection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Score</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Levels</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fully planned and implemented</td>
<td>- A multiyear SEL plan has been developed and the SEL team revisits key planning and implementation activities at regular intervals.</td>
<td>- An SEL plan has been developed and the SEL team revisits key planning and implementation activities at regular intervals.</td>
<td>- A schoolwide SEL implementation plan has been developed and the SEL team revisits planning and implementation activities but on an intermittent basis (e.g., team membership has been reconsidered, vision has been reviewed for continued relevance, etc.).</td>
<td>- A schoolwide SEL implementation plan has been developed but there is no formal system for reviewing implementation activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Data are regularly used by the SEL team to make decisions about SEL programming and to improve the quality of practice.</td>
<td>- Some adjustments have been made to the schoolwide SEL implementation plan based on this review.</td>
<td>- No adjustments have been made to the schoolwide SEL implementation plan based on this review.</td>
<td>- Data regarding student social and emotional competence are not collected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Data regarding student social and emotional competence are collected and provided back to teachers.</td>
<td>- Data regarding student social and emotional competence are collected and provided to teachers.</td>
<td>- Data regarding student social and emotional competence are collected and discussed within the SEL team but are not shared with teachers.</td>
<td>- Evidence-based SEL programming has started but implementation is not being monitored regularly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The SEL team shares data with multiple stakeholders at regularly planned intervals to inform decision-making.</td>
<td>- Implementation of evidence-based SEL programs is monitored regularly.</td>
<td>- Implementation of SEL strategies at the three school setting levels are not monitored regularly.</td>
<td>- Use of evidence-based SEL programming has started and implementation is monitored but the information is not reviewed in any systematic way to improve practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Teachers are provided with data related to evidence-based SEL program implementation but there is no process in place to discuss or solve problems revealed by the data.</td>
<td>- Teachers are provided with data related to evidence-based SEL program implementation but there is no process in place to discuss or solve problems revealed by the data.</td>
<td>- Use of evidence-based SEL programming has started and implementation is monitored but the information is not reviewed in any systematic way to improve practice.</td>
<td>- Implementation of SEL strategies at the three school setting levels are not monitored regularly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- SEL strategies are being implemented at the three school setting levels.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEL strategies are being implemented at the three school setting levels and implementation data are used to improve practice.</td>
<td>school setting levels and the implementation quality of these activities is monitored but the data could be used more effectively to improve practice.</td>
<td>SEL strategies are being implemented at the three school setting levels but there are no systems in place to monitor the implementation quality of these activities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1 Tools

Tool 1.1: Selecting and Establishing an SEL Leadership Team
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- Establishing SEL Leadership Team Roles and Responsibilities .................. 4

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Tool 1.1: Selecting and Establishing an SEL Leadership Team

Purpose

This tool can guide the principal and school leaders through the identification and selection of an SEL leadership team that is committed, knowledgeable, and well-balanced.

How to use this tool

Work through each of the two sections of this tool:

- Guidelines for Selecting a Team helps identify people in the school and the broader community to invite to participate on the SEL leadership team.
- Establishing SEL Leadership Team Roles and Responsibilities suggests roles to fill on the team and ways to use them to orient possible team members on how to contribute to the SEL effort.

Guidelines for Selecting a Team

Decide whether the SEL team will be a new team or will be built upon an existing team

A new team can serve as a dedicated advocacy group for SEL. However, linking with an existing team, group, or committee can be an efficient way to build upon current school climate and school improvement efforts, particularly if the existing group helps to integrate SEL with academics. Another option is to have a broad-based steering committee that provides guidance to a smaller SEL team that carries out the ongoing planning, implementation, and monitoring progress.

Determine the chairperson and co-chair

Initially, it is helpful for the chairperson to be the principal with an influential teacher leader as the co-chair. If that is not possible, consider another administrator to serve as the team’s co-chair.

Identify candidates who could serve as members

Ideally the SEL team will consist of people with varied experiences, points of view, and beliefs about SEL. Seek balance and representation from a range of stakeholders, including a variety of grades and/or content areas, programs/groups in the school (e.g., representatives of after-school programs, classified staff, English language learners staff, and special needs education staff), students, family members or other stakeholders depending on the student population.

As you identify people, look for these characteristics:

- Willing to communicate their point of view in meetings, share information and seek peer’s feedback.
- Interested in exploring both supportive and challenging perspectives on SEL.
- Willing to collaborate actively to design the vision, goals, and action plan, and provide guidance during implementation.
Use this chart to help identify 5-15 people for the SEL leadership team. Roles may change over time, depending on what constituencies and perspectives are needed. Note any changes in personnel if team composition changes over time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role in School</th>
<th>Name(s) of People</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal or administrator as co-chairperson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead teacher or member of student support services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Representatives from different grade levels/departments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Representatives with different points of view and experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• At least one person who will challenge the group and help them identify issues/problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A school building teacher’s union representative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Support Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School psychologists</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social worker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Counselor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Speech pathologist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Special education teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialists</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Music</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Art</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Physical education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More than one, especially if varied backgrounds/experiences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One who has children in multiple grades</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Representative(s) with community or funding connections</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other school staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Deans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Noncertified teaching assistant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Secretary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Custodian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other community stakeholders (e.g., advocates, elected officials, representatives of community organizations)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process observer to provide feedback on team effectiveness in meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Establishing SEL Leadership Team Roles and Responsibilities

After identifying candidates, invite them to participate and gauge their interest in helping to implement SEL schoolwide. Make the case for why SEL is important and why the candidate’s participation is important for the team’s success. At the same time be up front about the time commitment participation will require. Typically, SEL teams meet monthly one to two hours.

Keep in mind the types of roles that are needed on the SEL team. General expectations for all team members include the following:

- Participating actively in the team planning process.
- Developing their knowledge base about SEL.
- Volunteering to lead or participate in a work group (e.g., conducting a resources and needs assessment, integrating SEL into curriculum standards).
- Acting as a liaison with their stakeholder group, sharing the work, and asking for input or feedback.

Co-chairs of the SEL team

Initially the school principal and an influential teacher leader may serve as team co-chairs. Their decision-making power ensures that the team can work efficiently with administrative support. Ultimately, the purpose of their role is to ensure that the six key activities in the School Theory of Action are systematically addressed.

The co-chair roles could include:

- Overseeing and promoting the team’s progress.
- Collaboratively planning and facilitating team meetings.
- Encouraging team members to contribute to the process.
- Advocating and being champions for SEL schoolwide and districtwide to foster buy-in for SEL.

Scribe

The scribe’s role includes:

- Taking notes during team meetings.
- Distributing the meeting minutes to those present at the meeting, together with an agenda for the next meeting, as well as any other relevant materials.
- Maintaining an archive of meeting minutes in order to have a written record of progress for future planning.
Planning

Schoolwide planning for SEL benefits from having members on the team with experience in the following:

- Strategic planning and school improvement planning
- Visioning
- Curriculum review and selection
- Communication

Collecting, analyzing, and managing data

Whether informally assessing opinions or conducting a systematic resources and needs assessment, having team members who are experienced in collecting, analyzing, and organizing data will be beneficial. Given the importance of evaluating the impact of SEL, include a team member(s) with expertise related to interpreting and sharing results of data collection.
Tool 1.2: Developing a Schoolwide Implementation Plan

Purpose

This tool is designed to be used by the SEL team to develop a plan to guide the implementation process for schoolwide SEL.

How to use this tool

This planning template is structured around the six key activities of CASEL’s School Theory of Action. SEL teams may choose to use this template by itself or in tandem with an existing planning process. Either way, carefully planning how schoolwide SEL will be put into practice keeps everyone focused and on track.

The template allows the SEL team to list the action steps and tools they will use to address each of the key activities in the School Theory of Action. Once the actions and tools are identified, the team can list the individuals who are responsible for completing them, the resources they will need, the projected cost, and a projected completion date.

This template is also constructed in a way that allows the SEL team to plan for multiple years of implementation. Because changes will occur each year that may affect the implementation process, the team may want to plan for one year at a time. Also, there may be more of a focus on certain key activities during the first year while other key activities will be addressed as schoolwide SEL advances.

When used over time, the plan can be a useful way to summarize the team’s progress – especially since it can be integrated with information from the Schoolwide Implementation Rubric. The SEL team can indicate what the school’s rubric rating was for each activity and each year on the template and track how each key activity’s rating changes over time.

The template also includes a one-page summary to help present the plan to the school community.
## One-Page Summary of Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year:___________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School Theory of Action (ToA)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a shared vision to lead schoolwide SEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess SEL-related resources and needs to inform planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide ongoing and embedded professional learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopt schoolwide evidence-based programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate SEL into the core functioning of the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use data to inform and improve SEL practice and student outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Three-Year Plan for Schoolwide SEL Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Name:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Contact Information (name, email, and phone number):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please list the names and positions of the people involved in completing this plan.

1) Name: Position:  
2) Name: Position:  
3) Name: Position:  
4) Name: Position:  
5) Name: Position:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Theory of Action (ToA) Activity</th>
<th>Rating on School ToA Rubric</th>
<th>Action Steps &amp; Tools to Use</th>
<th>Person(s) Responsible</th>
<th>Resources Needed &amp; Cost</th>
<th>Target Completion Date</th>
<th>Actual Completion Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Establish a shared vision to lead schoolwide SEL</td>
<td>Year One</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year Two</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year Three</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Assess SEL-related resources and needs to</td>
<td>Year One</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inform planning</td>
<td>Year Two</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year Three</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| 3. Provide ongoing and embedded professional learning | Year One |
|                                                      |         |
|                                                      | Year Two |
|                                                      | Year Three |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Adopt evidence-based programs</th>
<th>Year One</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year Three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Integrate SEL into the core functioning of the school</td>
<td>Year One</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year Three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Use data to inform and improve SEL practice and student outcomes</td>
<td>Year One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year Three</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tool 1.3: Planning for SEL Leadership Team Meetings

Purpose

This tool is designed to assist SEL teams in conducting their first meeting and planning what they want to focus on and accomplish during their first year of implementation. The tool includes reflection questions that can be used after the first year to maintain momentum.

How to use this tool

This tool is divided into three parts. The first part provides an example of what the first meeting of the SEL team meeting might focus on. By reviewing this, teams can start developing an agenda and discussion topics for the initial meeting based on team members’ current knowledge, commitment, and experience with SEL.

The second part includes an example of topics the team could focus on during their first year. The SEL team can review this together to brainstorm ideas and discuss possible areas of focus.

The third part provides reflection questions the team can use to plan for the next phases of their schoolwide SEL effort.
Example of the first SEL team meeting agenda

The team leaders can convene the first meeting to set the tone for schoolwide SEL by creating an atmosphere of invitation, warmth, trust, and shared purpose. Below is an example of an agenda for such a meeting.

We recommend that you have available a healthy snack and some water, especially if the meeting is at the end of the working day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Estimate</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>For a Small Group (5-8 people)</th>
<th>For a Large Group (8 to 16 people or groups that have students)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>Welcome, purpose, and community building</td>
<td>Ask members to introduce themselves and say why they want to be a part of this team.</td>
<td>Ask members to form small groups of two or three, introduce themselves, and say why they want to be a part of this team. Then ask the small groups to share what they learned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Give team members an opportunity to suggest other potential stakeholders to participate on the team.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 min.</td>
<td>Roles and responsibilities of the SEL team</td>
<td>Invite the SEL team to examine and share what they are doing to develop SEL in the students, to identify needs, and to guide the development of the vision, the planning, and the implementation. Discuss potential problems or barriers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 10 min.       | Guidelines or agreements for working as a group | Create a climate of trust and safety by establishing shared agreements and deciding how the team will make decisions. Share examples of agreements that SEL teams have used for working together and invite the group to modify or add to these suggestions.  
- Speak for yourself  
- Allow one person to speak at a time and finish his/her thoughts  
- Encourage a variety of perspectives  
- Suspend assumptions and judgments  
- Listen deeply and respectfully  
Work with the group to establish the meeting calendar for the year. | Engage small groups in reviewing the agreements and making suggestions for additions and/or modifications. Chart the behaviors and reach agreement as a whole group. |
| 30 min.       | Review: What is SEL?; Why SEL?; What are our strengths, resources, and needs for schoolwide SEL? | Provide handouts or do a short PowerPoint presentation, Tool 1.7. Consider using Tool 1.6: Developing Talking Points for Communicating the “Big Idea” of SEL or Figure 1. Social and Emotional Learning Core Competencies in the Introduction.  
Provide an overview of the Theory of Action (TOA). Consider using Schoolwide Implementation Rubric and Figure 2: Levels of Schoolwide SEL in the Introduction. |                                                                 |
| 20 min. | Create a context for developing a schoolwide SEL vision by exploring current SEL programming and practices | Before developing a vision, begin to establish a common understanding about SEL through dialogue with the full team about the components of schoolwide SEL and what the school is already doing in the areas of:  
- Building adult SEL competence  
- Establishing a positive climate and culture  
- Integrating SEL into standards and curriculum  
- Infusing SEL into instruction and assessment  
- Explicitly teaching SEL skills.  

Develop some general priorities around areas for growth. Explain that this is an initial discussion to create a context for the work of the SEL team in future meetings. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>Establish a monthly meeting calendar of SEL team meetings for the school year. Reflect on results and close</td>
<td>Establish a regular time for the monthly meeting of the SEL team and a list of possible topics to address. Summarize what happened in the meeting, ask for any reflections or observations, and thank members for their time and active participation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Suggested Meetings/Topics for Year One

For year one, the following suggestions are based on an SEL team that meets monthly during the school year with the exception of December. Two possible sequences for the first year are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year One</th>
<th>For a group that is beginning to explore SEL practices and programming</th>
<th>For a group that is knowledgeable about SEL practices and committed to SEL programming in the school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Introduce SEL</td>
<td>Launch Schoolwide SEL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1) <em>Create a learning climate</em> of invitation, warmth, trust, and shared purpose.</td>
<td>1) <em>Create a learning climate</em> of invitation, warmth, trust, and shared purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) <em>Share roles and responsibilities</em> of SEL team members.</td>
<td>2) <em>Share roles and responsibilities</em> of SEL team members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) <em>Facilitate an “Introduction to SEL”</em> presentation; discuss what SEL is, why it’s important to the school, and what current programming and practices exist to build adult and student SEL.</td>
<td>3) <em>Facilitate an “Introduction to SEL”</em> presentation; discuss what SEL is, why it’s important to the school, and what current programming and practices exist to build adult and student SEL.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4) <em>Complete the Schoolwide Implementation Rubric</em> and discuss SEL priorities.</td>
<td>4) <em>Complete the Schoolwide Implementation Rubric</em> and discuss SEL priorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5) <em>Establish monthly meeting times/topics.</em></td>
<td>5) <em>Establish monthly meeting times/topics.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Develop Knowledge and Understanding of Schoolwide SEL</td>
<td>Develop Shared SEL Vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1) <em>Finalize the SEL team calendar</em> and meeting topics.</td>
<td>1) <em>Finalize the SEL team calendar</em> and meeting topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) <em>Develop activities to be shared each month with team members and staff on SEL practices and programming</em> through this Guide’s tools and resources, presenters and guests, videos, readings and discussions, school climate activities, and sharing visits to other school’s programs</td>
<td>2) <em>Deepen knowledge and understanding of SEL practices and programming with team members and staff each month</em> through this Guide’s tools and resources, presenters and guests, videos, readings and discussions, school climate activities, sharing visits to other school’s programs, and focusing on adult SEL competence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) <em>Focus on building adult SEL competence</em> through a self-assessment and discussion activity.</td>
<td>3) <em>Develop a draft or several options of a shared SEL vision</em>; bring feedback from stakeholders to the next meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4) <em>Introduce the Tool 2.1: School Strengths Inventory</em> and begin to identify existing SEL programming, practices, and policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Develop a Shared SEL Vision</td>
<td>Assess SEL-Related Resources and Needs to Inform SEL Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1) <em>Develop a draft or several options of a shared SEL vision</em>; bring feedback from stakeholders to the next meeting.</td>
<td>1) <em>Finalize the SEL vision statement</em> with stakeholder feedback; share with stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) <em>Introduce Tool 2.1: School Strengths Inventory</em> and begin to identify existing SEL programming, practices, and policies.</td>
<td>2) <em>Complete and discuss priorities from the School Strengths Inventory.</em></td>
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<td>3) <em>Develop goals for the SEL action plan</em> that address the priorities identified in the School Strengths Inventory.</td>
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<td>4) <em>Establish smaller work groups</em> to develop plans for priorities, e.g., school culture and climate, SEL in standards and curriculum, SEL instruction and assessment, explicit SEL skill building, and adult SEL.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Assess SEL-Related Resources and Needs</td>
<td>Develop SEL Action Plan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1) <em>Finalize the SEL vision statement</em> with stakeholder feedback; share with stakeholders.</td>
<td>1) <em>Review plans</em> by committee members.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2) <em>Complete and discuss priorities from the School Strengths Inventory.</em></td>
<td>2) <em>Develop three-year SEL action plan with goals, tasks, personnel, resources, and timelines.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) <em>Develop goals for the SEL action plan</em> that address the priorities identified in the School Strengths Inventory.</td>
<td>3) <em>Plan to share with all stakeholders</em> for input/feedback before next meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4) <em>Establish smaller work groups</em> to develop plans for priorities, e.g., school culture and climate, SEL in curriculum, SEL instruction, explicit SEL skill building, and adult SEL.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Develop SEL Action Plan</td>
<td>Finalize SEL Action Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1) <em>Review plans</em> by committee members.</td>
<td>1) <em>Finalize plan</em> and add detail as needed. Share with stakeholders.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) <em>Develop SEL action plan through Year 2 with goals, tasks, personnel, resources, and</em></td>
<td>2) <em>Engage staff in developing and offering SEL professional learning opportunities</em> to cultivate their adult SEL competence,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Finalize SEL Implementation Plan/Pilot SEL Activities</td>
<td>Review Evidence-based SEL Programs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1) <strong>Finalize plan</strong> and add detail as needed. Share with stakeholders.</td>
<td>1) <em>If the school has an evidence-based SEL program, develop an expansion plan.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) <em>Engage staff in developing SEL professional learning opportunities</em> to cultivate their adult SEL competence, create a positive learning environment, and enhance instructional practices that promote SEL.</td>
<td>2) <em>If the school does not have an evidence-based SEL program, develop a curriculum review committee and use data from the School Strengths Inventory and SEL goals to review evidence-based SEL programs from the CASEL Program Guide (see casel.org or district options).</em></td>
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<td>3) <em>Order review curricula,</em> develop questions, contact the program providers to answer questions, and select program candidates. Consider observing schools that are using one or two evidence-based SEL programs under consideration.</td>
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<td>4) <em>Share program candidate(s) with staff.</em> Invite them to review programs and provide feedback to the curriculum review committee.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>April</th>
<th>Offer Professional Learning</th>
<th>Select an Evidence-based SEL Program</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1) <strong>Design and implement professional learning activities</strong> for staff members during staff meetings and common planning time that help create an SEL climate and culture and deeper understanding of SEL programming, instructional practices, and professional behaviors.</td>
<td>1) <strong>Select an evidence-based SEL program</strong> to expand or adopt in the following school year, based on staff feedback and preference.</td>
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<td><strong>Option:</strong> 2) <em>If ready, begin to review evidence-based SEL programs</em> from the CASEL Program Guide (see casel.org) or district options.</td>
<td>2) <strong>Develop a professional learning and implementation plan for adopting an evidence-based SEL program</strong> to be ready to implement in the fall.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) <em>Order review curricula,</em> develop questions, contact the program provider to answer questions, and.</td>
<td>3) <em>Contact the program provider to arrange training before the next school year.</em></td>
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</table>

*timelines.*

3) *Plan to share with all stakeholders* for input/feedback before next meeting.

create a positive learning environment, and enhance instructional practices that promote SEL.
select program candidates. Consider visiting schools that are using one or two evidence-based SEL programs under consideration.

4) **Invite staff to review lessons from program candidates** and try some out with students.

| May       | 1) Celebrate learning and accomplishments.  
|           | 2) Discuss SEL team membership for the following school year. | 1) Celebrate growth and accomplishments.  
|           | 2) Discuss SEL team membership for the following school year. |
Suggested Reflections Questions for the Next Phases of Schoolwide SEL

After Year One we recommend that the SEL team consider the following reflection questions as they plan for Years Two and Three. The way they move forward with schoolwide SEL depends on the progress made during the first year. This can be determined by a review of the Schoolwide Implementation Rubric. Also, the school may have collected data related to school climate and discipline.

The team can use the following questions to reflect on changes that have occurred in the first year:

- Will the SEL team remain the same, rotate members off and on, or expand?
- What aspects of this Guide will need to be reviewed with new staff?
- After reviewing the Schoolwide Implementation Rubric or any available data, what adjustments could be made in future years to enhance schoolwide SEL?
- What key activities of the School Theory of Action could be addressed next year?
- When would it be reasonable to expect that:
  - All school staff members model SEL competencies consistently?
  - The school has developed a common language related to SEL?
  - The school’s climate is supportive for all learners?
- Will the school be ready to start implementing professional learning for SEL?
- Will the school be ready to select an evidence-based SEL program?

As the SEL effort progresses and the school is ready for professional learning related to SEL or to select an evidence-based SEL program, appropriate questions for reflection include:

- Is there a lead teacher who can support the other teachers as they start to implement SEL?
- Is there an opportunity for teachers to share new learnings?
- What process is in place for monitoring implementation?
- Is SEL an essential component in the school professional development plan? What areas need professional learning, and who will lead these sessions?
- How does the school monitor the new SEL program to ensure it is implemented with quality?
- How will the school assess student learning and application of SEL skills?

As schoolwide SEL starts to become integrated deeper into a school, the SEL team often turns to helping school staff understand how SEL aligns with all initiatives. To ensure that staff is encouraged to integrate SEL and is committed to it, consider the following reflection questions:

- Do all adults model, teach, and integrate SEL skills in their instructional practices and curriculum? If this is an expectation, how is it evaluated?
- What professional learning supports teachers as they integrate SEL into curriculum and instruction?
- Has the school reviewed discipline practices to align with the SEL vision and philosophy?
- Does the school have a clear SEL communication plan?
- How does the school continue to engage families and the community as part of coordinating SEL schoolwide?
- Can the team identify and access community resources or grant possibilities to provide additional resources for the SEL process?
Tool 1.4: Developing a Shared Vision to Guide SEL Development

Purpose

This tool suggests an approach that SEL teams can use to develop a shared vision of SEL that guides the planning and implementation of schoolwide SEL efforts.

How to use this tool

The SEL team can use this tool to understand the characteristics of effective vision statements and to work collaboratively to develop an initial SEL vision to share with multiple stakeholders for feedback and approval. We encourage schools to incorporate language from the SEL vision into the school’s mission statement as well. In some cases schools may choose to integrate the SEL vision and the mission statement into one.

Characteristics of an effective vision

- Provides a vivid description that motivates and energizes.
- Uses clear and concise language and is stated in a few phrases or sentences.
- Contains a simple, powerful or memorable phrase that is easy to remember and captures the larger vision, the big idea.
- Employs words that are charged with emotion.
- Represents the best possible outcome.
- Is written in present tense language.

Steps for developing an SEL vision

1. At an SEL team meeting, participants work in small groups to imagine the ideal school as it relates to academic, social, and emotional learning. Collect the team’s hopes and expectations using such guiding questions as:
   a. What would the core values be?
   b. What qualities and skills do we want all students to possess upon leaving our school?
   c. What is the culture or climate we want to build?
2. SEL team members list their responses on sticky notes. One chart is available for each question.
3. Small groups share their sticky notes for each question with the large group on the appropriate chart. As each question is addressed by the whole group, notice what words/ideas continue to emerge repeatedly and highlight them.
4. The team discusses the words/ideas and which ones have the most emotion, power, and ability to inspire.
   a. Which ones can we all agree are the most important?
   b. What effect would a focus on each word/idea have on our actions or what we say to students?
   c. Will this inspire others?
5. Combine the words/ideas that are similar in meaning.
6. Agree on general ideas and delegate the writing of a draft to SEL team members who are good writers. Plan to share the draft at the next SEL team meeting.
7. At the next SEL Leadership meeting, approve a draft of the SEL vision. SEL team members are encouraged to take the draft back to their respective groups in the school and community in order
to obtain feedback and suggestions for revisions. Settings for discussing the draft of the SEL vision include staff meetings, common planning time, professional learning sessions, and informal gatherings. Plan to bring the feedback to the next SEL team meeting.

8. At the following meeting, the SEL team members can incorporate the feedback they have gathered and develop a final version to be shared with staff at the next staff meeting. Staff should approve the final SEL vision statement.

Sample Vision/Mission Statement

**Elementary School**

*Leataata Floyd Elementary School, Sacramento, California*

At Leataata Floyd Elementary, we believe that children learn best in a safe and caring school environment. We place a high emphasis on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) where children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL, 2012). We also use Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to establish a common purpose and approach to schoolwide discipline by establishing positive expectations for all students and teaching, practicing, and reinforcing these expectations. We call this the Panther Way!

**Middle School**

*Romig Middle School, Anchorage, Alaska*

We, the community of Romig Middle School, will create an environment where students and adults come together cooperatively to strive for academic achievement and social-emotional growth. Our diverse community will encourage responsibility, promote honesty and cooperation, and empower students to have self-respect in order to achieve success today and in the future.

**High School**

*North-Grand High School, Chicago, Illinois*

To create a nurturing community of life-long learners who can strive successfully to achieve their highest intellectual, emotional, social, and ethical potential;

To develop an environment where students construct meaning by actively participating in the learning process, embracing academic excellence, high moral values, and proper social behaviors;

To implement an intellectually challenging core curriculum; focusing on reading, math, and modern technology;

To develop productive partnerships between students, parents, teachers, and the community.
Tool 1.5: Personal Assessment and Reflection –
SEL Competencies for School Leaders, Staff, and Adults

Purpose

This tool is designed to help schoolwide SEL leaders to assess and understand their own levels of social and emotional competence.

How to use this tool

This tool was designed for personal self-reflection. It should not be used to evaluate performance. Principals, other administrators, SEL team members, and other staff members can use it to assess their personal strengths and think about how they can model those strengths when interacting with others. The tool offers prompts that encourage thinking about ways to promote growth in areas of social competence that need improvement.

If used as part of professional learning for SEL, insights gained from the self-assessment and personal reflection this tool encourages can be shared in small group discussions.

To complete the self-assessment and reflection:

- Read each statement, try to think of specific situations where the statement applies, then rate yourself on the statement by marking the appropriate box (rarely, sometimes, often).
- If a statement does not apply to you, draw a line through the rating box.
- When you finish, use the results to search for patterns of strength to guide your personal social-emotional growth process. You may also find some areas you would like to improve. Don’t judge your responses as “good” or “not so good.” Just answer as honestly as you can.

The reflection questions at the end of this tool can be used after completing the self-assessment. They are intended to help users of the tool take action on what they learned through the self-assessment.
### Self-Awareness

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<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EMOTIONAL SELF-AWARENESS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>I am able to identify, recognize, and name my emotions in the moment.</td>
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<td>I recognize the relationship between my feelings and my reactions to people and situations.</td>
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<td><strong>ACCURATE SELF-PERCEPTION</strong></td>
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<td>I know and am realistic about my strengths and limitations.</td>
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<td>I encourage others to tell me how my actions have affected them.</td>
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<td>I know how my own needs and values affect the decisions I make.</td>
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<td><strong>SELF-CONFIDENCE</strong></td>
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<td>I believe I have what it takes to influence my own destiny and lead others effectively.</td>
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<td>I feel confident that I can handle whatever comes along with calm self-assurance and a relaxed presence.</td>
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<td><strong>OPTIMISM</strong></td>
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<td>I believe that most experiences help me learn and grow.</td>
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<td>I can see the positive even in negative situations.</td>
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### Self-Management

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<td><strong>SELF-CONTROL</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>I find ways to manage my emotions and channel them in useful ways without harming anyone.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I stay calm, clear-headed and unflappable under high stress and during a crisis.</td>
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<td><strong>SETTING AND ACHIEVING GOALS</strong></td>
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<td>I have high personal standards that motivate me to seek performance improvements for myself and those I lead.</td>
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<td>I am pragmatic, setting measurable, challenging, and attainable goals.</td>
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<td><strong>ADAPTABILITY</strong></td>
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<td>I accept new challenges and adjust to change.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I modify my thinking in the face of new information and realities.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>I can juggle multiple demands without losing focus or energy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I balance my work life with personal renewal time.</td>
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### Social Awareness

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<tr>
<td><strong>EMPATHY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>I listen actively and can grasp another person’s perspective and feelings from both verbal and nonverbal cues.</td>
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<td><strong>RESPECT FOR OTHERS</strong></td>
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<td>I believe that, in general, people are doing their best, and I expect the best of them.</td>
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<td><strong>APPRECIATION OF DIVERSITY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>I appreciate and get along with people of diverse backgrounds and cultures in my school community and utilize inclusionary practices to ensure all voices are represented.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ORGANIZATIONAL AWARENESS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>I am astute in organizational situations and am able to identify crucial social networks.</td>
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<td>I understand the organizational forces at work, the guiding values, and unspoken rules that operate among people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship Skills</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Often</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>COMMUNICATION</strong></td>
<td>I foster an emotionally nurturing and safe environment for staff, students, families, and community members.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I am open and authentic with others about my values and beliefs, goals, and guiding principles.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I communicate with and encourage interaction with staff, students, parents, caregivers, and community members.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I can articulate ideas that are important to me in ways that motivate others to become involved.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS</strong></td>
<td>I have a genuine interest in cultivating people’s growth and developing their SEL skills</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I am able to openly admit my mistakes and shortcomings to myself and others.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I try to understand the perspective and experiences of others before I offer suggestions.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I give timely and constructive feedback as a coach and mentor.</td>
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<td><strong>CONFLICT MANAGEMENT</strong></td>
<td>I am comfortable dealing with conflict, listening to feelings from all parties and helping them understand different perspectives.</td>
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<td>I am able to guide conflicting parties to find a common solution.</td>
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<td><strong>TEAMWORK AND COLLABORATION</strong></td>
<td>I am good at teamwork and collaboration and generate a collegial atmosphere that inspires us all.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I build relationships with members of diverse groups.</td>
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<td>I involve key stakeholders in important decision-making tasks to ensure we are making wise choices.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I embody teamwork in my leadership style and personal behaviors as a role model to staff, students, and the school community.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsible Decision-Making</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION AND SITUATION ANALYSIS</strong></td>
<td>I am able to define the core of the problem and differentiate it from solution options.</td>
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<td>I recognize the need for change, challenge the status quo, and encourage new thinking in my school.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I conduct a needs analysis and involve the staff to identify problems before starting a new initiative.</td>
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<td><strong>PROBLEM SOLVING</strong></td>
<td>I involve others to generate multiple solutions and predict the outcome (of each solution) for key problems.</td>
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<td>I find practical and respectful ways to overcome barriers, even when it comes to making decisions that may not be popular.</td>
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<td><strong>EVALUATION &amp; REFLECTION</strong></td>
<td>I use more than one measure to assess progress toward social, emotional, and academic goals.</td>
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<td>I provide opportunities for self-reflection and group reflection on progress toward goals and the process used.</td>
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<td><strong>PERSONAL, MORAL &amp; ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY</strong></td>
<td>I treat other people in the way I would want to be treated.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>I encourage community service activities for students, staff, and the community.</td>
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Reflecting on this process

After completing the self-assessment, take a moment to look at the statements and how you rated them. Here are some self-reflection questions you can ask yourself:

- What were the patterns in the responses?
- If you consider that statements marked as “often” could be indicators of personal strengths:
  - What competencies do your strengths relate to?
  - Which of your strengths do you believe will help you guide schoolwide SEL?
  - Which are you most proud of?

- If you consider that statements marked as “rarely” could be considered as current challenges:
  - Do these challenges relate to a particular competency?
  - Select one or two you believe you will need to help you guide schoolwide SEL.
  - Develop a strategy that you will use to remind yourself to practice this new behavior, or bring it up as something to work on with a mentor or a coach.

- When looking at your responses, was there anything that surprised you? Was there anything that helped confirmed what you already knew about yourself?

Taking action in light of what you learned

- List ways you can model your strengths for others and embed them throughout the school day.

- List ways you can improve on any challenges you currently face.
Tool 1.6: Developing Talking Points for Communicating the “Big Idea” of SEL

Purpose

This tool is intended to help the SEL team develop talking points that can be used to communicate and create interest among staff and community members in the “big idea” of SEL.

How to use this tool

Talking points can be developed during SEL team meetings, incorporated into a school’s communication plan for SEL, and shared through venues such as staff meetings, common planning time, and grade or subject-level team meetings.

Begin by developing understandings of experiences and issues related to SEL in the school by doing one or more of the following activities:

- Make sure all staff members are knowledgeable about CASEL’s five SEL core competencies, the components of schoolwide SEL, and the research that supports high-quality SEL implementation. The SEL team may use Tool 1.7: Becoming an SEL School as a tool to support this introduction, which can be presented at a staff meeting or professional learning session.

- Think about the aspirations the team has for the school. What role do students’ social and emotional development play in the school’s values, goals, and vision for high-quality education?

- Think about the issues and needs the staff has identified in the past that get in the way of students achieving their goals. Look at Figure 1. Social and Emotional Learning Core Competencies (see Chapter 1) and identify which ones, if improved, might be associated with students overcoming these obstacles.

- Chat informally with individual staff members about the school’s past history with social and emotional learning. Ask questions such as, “What have you done in the past related to SEL? What strategies are you still using because they work? Are there any SEL efforts that were tried and failed? What were they? Why did they fail?” Discuss their responses with the SEL team.

- Invite teachers who are experienced with SEL to share their thoughts on questions such as, “I see you’re really effective with ______________. What are you doing? How did you start doing that? How long have you been doing ______________? How did you learn about that?” Arrange for interviews and share teachers’ responses with the team.
After current understandings, experiences, and issues related to SEL at the school have been identified, start the process of fostering schoolwide buy-in and commitment to SEL. Have something in mind that will open the discussion in a nonthreatening way. Use staff meetings, common planning time, professional learning opportunities, and informal conversations to share these ideas with staff:

- Provide examples of SEL practices that are working in the school.
- Share an inspirational story or example of a time when a teacher made a difference or helped a student improve.
- Recognize issues or needs that teachers raise and acknowledge their frustration as they address them.
- Generate a sense of optimism that things can change if the school and community work together to implement SEL practices that will specifically address those issues and needs. Begin to look at how the five SEL core competencies can address each one. Ask, “What have you learned about SEL that may be helpful?”
- Invite staff to look around them and generate stories that exemplify SEL experiences that are making a difference in students’ and teachers’ lives. At staff meetings share examples of a student “getting it,” a new SEL strategy that worked well, a student’s behavior changing for the better because of learning SEL skills, and similar successes.

Use a variety of means to introduce SEL. Consider the following examples

- Show a video of a teacher using SEL strategies (see Chapter 1 for links to videos).
- Generate ideas from the group that describe when they most recently used or taught an SEL skill.
- Brainstorm ways to create a positive learning environment in the school and classrooms.
- Share instructional methods that promote the five core competencies. These could include inquiry-based instruction, shared agreements for a respectful classroom, cooperative learning, reflection, and project-based learning, among others.
- Discuss ways that all the venues in the school can be places to teach, model, and reinforce SEL.
- Read a poem or story that illustrates a student’s point of view about one of the five SEL core competencies.
- Develop ideas for ways to engage families and community members in supporting SEL.

Develop talking points with the SEL team during a team meeting and flesh out a plan for sharing these ideas with the school community.
## Develop Talking Points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developing Talking Points</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Issues or needs that have been identified</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources of optimism for how SEL can help address needs and issues and support students’ success in school and life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples of SEL-related programming and practices that staff have used to address these issues and needs that are working</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational stories about a time when a staff member made a difference for a student or a group of students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videos, poems, examples of staff using SEL skills and other examples to teach, model, and reinforce SEL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Tool 2.1: School Strengths Inventory

Purpose

This tool is designed to help the SEL team conduct a resources and needs assessment for schoolwide SEL. It involves a reflection process the team can use to take stock of the ways SEL is already being promoted in the school structured around the three levels of Schoolwide SEL, and it prompts the team to identify strategies currently being used at each of these levels. Once the tool is completed, the SEL team can use the information to develop goals and implementation plans for schoolwide SEL.

How to use this tool

This tool has three sections. Each aligns with one of the three levels of Schoolwide SEL:

- **Section A**: SEL curriculum and instruction used in classrooms
- **Section B**: Schoolwide practices and policies that promote SEL throughout the building
- **Section C**: SEL promoted through family- and community-level partnerships

Some SEL teams will choose to complete all of the sections. In other cases, they may decide to complete only sections that are specific to top school priorities.

Each section includes reflection questions that prompt the SEL team to discuss where SEL is currently being implemented. We recommend that after discussing the sections as a team, input is sought from the broader school community. This could be done at an SEL team meeting, through grade level or subject area team meetings, or through a staff survey. Engaging the school community in compiling and reflecting on this information could create buy-in for schoolwide SEL among school and community stakeholders.

The ideal time frame for completing this tool is early in the school year or at the start of the schoolwide implementation process. If the school chooses to complete all three sections at the same time, the process can take approximately one month. For example, during the first two weeks, the SEL team may gather information for each section of the tool from district and school leaders, curriculum coordinators, and other stakeholders. This task can be divided among the SEL team and staff members. During the second two weeks, the SEL team may meet to compile and coordinate their findings, complete the tool, and reflect on its implications.

The final pages of the tool include blank templates that can be used to organize the key strengths and gaps in programming identified during the data-gathering process.

Gaps in programming can be considered as needs to address through schoolwide SEL. For example, the team may find that the school has no strategies for involving family members in SEL. Some strategies may not be supported at a sufficient level. For example, schoolwide behavior management practices may not teach SEL skills and instead only involve telling students what they can and cannot do.

The Strengths Inventory could be used alongside Tool 2.2: Making Use of Existing Data to Help Plan Schoolwide SEL. This tool helps identify data already collected in the school that can guide SEL planning.
It also provides a structured way for the SEL team to discuss and reflect on available data to help complete the Strengths Inventory.

Once the inventory is completed, the information can help in developing goals for schoolwide SEL and using **Tool 1.2: Developing a Schoolwide Implementation Plan**. The tool’s summaries could be used for multiple purposes, including:

- To develop specific and measurable goals SEL goals (see **Tool 2.6 Developing Goals for SEL Implementation**).
- To help develop a professional learning experience that builds on current strengths or addresses identified needs and priorities (see Chapter 3).
- To help identify programming and practices at all levels of the school that can help further integrate SEL into the school’s daily functions (discussed in detail in Chapter 5).
Section A: SEL Curriculum and Instruction Used in Classrooms

This section includes reflection questions the SEL team can use to discuss SEL strategies that are currently used in classrooms:

- Explicit instruction of social and emotional skills and content
- Instructional practices that support SEL
- Use of learning standards to guide SEL instruction and curriculum

These discussions should involve lead teachers or curriculum and instruction coordinators. Their input can be sought during staff, grade level, or subject area meetings. It is also important to involve classroom teachers. The SEL team will want to ensure that strengths are clearly linked to SEL. Guidelines for this are provided in Chapter 5.

Explicit instruction of social and emotional skills and content

- In what ways are social and emotional skills directly taught in classrooms?
- Are students provided with opportunities to practice the skills they are learning?
- Are evidence-based SEL programs used in the classroom to facilitate direct teaching of social emotional skills?
- Do all grade levels participate in social and emotional skills instruction? If so, is it sequenced so the skills students learn build on each other and progress as students grow in competence?
- Are there specific courses or subject areas that explicitly teach social-emotional skills?
- Do classroom management practices help students learn social and emotional skills?

Use of SEL standards to guide instruction and curriculum

- Have learning standards specific to SEL been developed by the state, district, or school?
  - If yes:
    - In what ways do SEL standards inform curriculum and lesson plans?
    - In what ways do SEL standards inform instructional practices?
  - If no:
    - Are other learning standards available that have SEL embedded in them?
    - What content areas would most likely have learning standards that address social and emotional skills?

Instructional practices that support SEL

Examples of instructional practices that promote SEL include inquiry-based learning, community building, brainstorming, cooperative learning, high-order thinking activities, guided practice, role play, simulations, peer teaching, consensus building, reflection, project-based learning, service-learning, and other highly engaging and interactive learning strategies.
• What instructional practices are used in classrooms to support SEL? This could involve instructional practices that are meant to foster positive relationships, strengthen student engagement, or those that specifically seek to develop any of the five core competencies.
• What specific SEL competencies do these instructional practices promote?
• Are there specific subject areas or grade levels that use specific instructional practices to promote student social and emotional development?
Section B: Schoolwide Practices and Policies that Promote SEL

The questions in this section relate to the following schoolwide practices and policies:

- Practices that build a safe and supportive climate
- Student support services that address SEL
- After-school activities that incorporate SEL
- Schoolwide policies that support SEL
- Professional learning opportunities for adult SEL

Discussions about current schoolwide SEL should involve administrators, classroom teachers, student support professionals, and any other school staff members who interact with students.

Practices that build a safe and supportive climate

- How does the school promote a positive and supportive learning climate?
- How does the school promote a sense of social, emotional, and physical safety?
- Have schoolwide norms been established? If so, were students involved in the process?
- In what ways does the school provide opportunities for student voice?
- In what ways do adults in the school intentionally model social and emotional competencies?
- In what ways do adults in the school intentionally cultivate supportive relationships with students?

Student support services that address SEL

- What support services promote student social and emotional development?
- What academic supports promote student social and emotional development?

After-school activities that incorporate SEL

- What afterschool activities promote SEL?
- How are these activities coordinated with other schoolwide goals?

Schoolwide policies that support SEL

- Does the school’s philosophy for learning value SEL?
- What schoolwide policies support SEL? An example would be positive discipline policies that promote student decision-making and hold students accountable for their behavior.
- What schoolwide policies make SEL more difficult to implement? For example, do discipline policies rely on suspensions or expulsions that exclude students?
Professional learning opportunities for adult SEL

- What professional learning opportunities help adults in the school enhance their own level of social and emotional competence?
- What professional learning opportunities help adults in the school enhance the social and emotional competence of all students?
**Section C: SEL promoted through family- and community-level partnerships**

The questions in this section relate to the following partnership strategies:

- Partnerships with families
- Partnerships with community agencies

Input from school staff members who are liaisons to families and the broader community will be critical when gathering this information. Any input from families and community partners can also be useful.

**Partnerships with families**

- In what ways does the school actively form partnerships with families?
- How does the school communicate with families?
- How are families encouraged to provide input?
- How does the school establish trust with families?
- Are there opportunities for families to volunteer at school?
- Is there a space in the school where families can congregate and get involved in their students’ education?
- Are there workshops aimed at helping families meet their children’s’ developmental needs? Is there programming for parents that focuses on SEL skill-building?

**Partnerships with community agencies**

- In what ways does the school partner with community agencies?
- What services are provided by community agencies in the school?
- What enriching community-based experiences are available for students? How many students participate?
- What steps are taken to ensure coordination of school programming and community programming to enhance SEL?
Section D: Summary of School Strengths

The templates in this section allow the SEL team to list the strengths and needs identified during the resources and needs assessment. Strengths may relate to SEL programming already being implemented or positive outcomes suggested by data. Gaps could relate to instances when SEL strategies could be improved or when available data suggest areas for growth (See Tool 2.2: Using Existing Data to Help Plan Schoolwide SEL).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies at the classroom level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explicit instruction of social-emotional skills and content</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Learning standards that are used to guide SEL instruction and inform curriculum |

| Instructional practices that support SEL |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflecting on classroom level data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data suggesting classroom-level strengths</td>
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</table>

| Data suggesting classroom-level needs |
### Strategies at the building level

- Practices that build a safe and supportive climate
- Student support services that address SEL
- After-school activities that incorporate SEL
- Schoolwide policies that support SEL
- Professional learning opportunities for adult SEL

### Reflecting on building level data

- Data suggesting building-level strengths
- Data suggesting needs at the building level

### Strategies at the family- and community-level

- Partnerships with families
- Partnerships with community agencies
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflecting on family- and community-level data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data suggesting strengths at the family level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data suggesting strengths at the community level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data suggesting needs at the family level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data suggesting needs at the community level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tool 2.2: Making Use of Existing School Outcome Data

Purpose of this tool

This tool helps SEL teams identify data already collected in the school related to schoolwide SEL and provides a process for reflecting on this information to guide planning.

How to use this tool

All schools collect data in some form. The SEL team can utilize available data to complete the resources and needs assessment and other planning activities. The charts in this tool are designed to keep track of available data and guide decisions on using it to monitor the progress and outcomes of schoolwide SEL. The tool includes a process for interpreting available data to complete the section of Tool 2.1: School Strengths Inventory related to strengths and needs based on data.
### Student Social and Emotional Competencies

Briefly describe how information about student social and emotional competencies is collected.  
*This may include surveys completed by students, school staff, and/or families.*

**Frequency of collection:**

**Staff members/department responsible for collecting this information:**

**How information is used:**

**Level of data (check all that apply):**
- [ ] Classroom
- [ ] Building
- [ ] Family
- [ ] Community

### Student Behavior: Discipline

Briefly describe how information about discipline in the school is collected.  
*This may include formal ways of tracking office or discipline referrals, information management systems, or surveys completed by school staff and/or students.*

**Frequency of collection:**

**Staff members/department responsible for collecting this information:**

**How information is used:**

**Level of data (check all that apply):**
- [ ] Classroom
- [ ] Building
- [ ] Family
- [ ] Community
### Student Behavior: Attendance

**Briefly describe how attendance is monitored in the school.**
*This may include uniform ways of tracking attendance schoolwide or practices used by individual teachers or grade levels.*

**Frequency of collection:**

**Staff members/department responsible for collecting this information:**

**How information is used:**

**Level of data (check all that apply):**
- [ ] Classroom
- [ ] Building
- [ ] Family
- [ ] Community

### School Climate

**Briefly describe how information about the school's climate is collected.**
*This may include surveys that are completed by students, school staff, and/or families.*

**Frequency of collection:**

**Staff members/department responsible for collecting this information:**

**How information is used:**

**Level of data (check all that apply):**
- [ ] Classroom
- [ ] Building
- [ ] Family
- [ ] Community
Reflecting on available data

This *Guide* strongly recommends that schools use available data to meaningfully plan for and monitor schoolwide SEL. This information can be used to help develop goals and plan an approach to schoolwide SEL that is customized to the school community. Here we offer a reflection process for learning from available school data.

Preparing to Reflect on Outcome Data

The data needs to be prepared and presented in a way that facilitates group discussion. This could include summary tables, graphs or charts, or a brief summary report.

The following questions relate to information collected from students. Similar questions could be asked related to responses from staff, families or community members.

Questions to Facilitate Reflection on Student Outcome Data

**How do different groups compare?**
- Are there differences in outcomes for boys and girls?
- How do students at different grade levels compare? How are their responses similar? Different?

Questions to Facilitate Reflection on Climate Data

**What patterns or consistencies exist in the data?**
- What are some relative areas of strength?
- What are some areas where improvement is needed?

**How do different groups compare?**
- Are there differences in outcomes for boys and girls?

**How do responses compare among groups who participated in data collection?**
- How similar or different are student responses compared with teachers’ responses?
- How similar or different are student responses compared with families' responses?
- How similar or different are student responses to the responses of school community members?

**Are there other potentially useful sources of data?**
- How do responses at this school compare to other schools in the district?
- How do local trends compared with those at a larger scale (e.g., across the state, nationally)?

Questions to Facilitate General Reflection

- What surprised you during this reflection process?
- Was there anything that this process confirmed for you?
- Are there additional questions or information needed to verify or clarify the interpretation of this information?
- Do data patterns relate to specific strategies or programming at the school?
- Does the school need additional SEL assessment or measurement resources?
Tool 2.3: Finding a Measure to Assess Student Social and Emotional Competencies

Purpose

This resource is designed to help the SEL team identify valid and reliable measures for assessing student social and emotional competencies.

How to use this resource

This resource is divided into three sections.

Section A: Why is it Useful to Assess Social and Emotional Competencies?

Section B: Where can validated assessment measures be found?

Section C: What criteria could be used when selecting an assessment measure?

Section A: Why is it Useful to Assess Social and Emotional Competencies?

Assessment is an important part of integrating social and emotional learning schoolwide. When used as part of a resources and needs assessment, assessment information can help to identify student strengths, highlight areas where students can develop further, and guide the SEL team in identifying what type of SEL programming they want to implement in their school.

When assessment is ongoing, the collected information can serve to gauge the impact SEL programming on students. It can also guide decisions for tailoring SEL programming to students and screening for students who could benefit from additional supports and services. At the classroom level SEL assessments can help track student progress and inform instruction.
Section B: Where can validated assessment measures be found?

The following online sources can be used to identify measures for assessing student social and emotional competencies that are valid and reliable. Definitions for validity and reliability – as well as other important measurement concepts – can be found on Resource 2.4: Basic Definitions of Important Measurement Concepts.

If the school has already selected an evidence-based SEL program, check with the program’s developer to see if they have assessment measures available.

Preschool through elementary

*Compendium of Preschool through Elementary School Social-Emotional Learning and Associated Assessment Measures*¹
This compendium includes descriptions of tools to assess the social and emotional learning (SEL) of preschool and elementary school students (i.e., five- to ten-year-olds), along with aspects of the contexts in which they learn and their learning behaviors.

*Strategies for Social and Emotional Learning: Preschool and Elementary Grade Student Learning Standards and Assessment*²
This brief provides information and strategies to implement and assess SEL in schools and districts. Its purpose is to (1) describe SEL student learning standards, (2) introduce a set of universal teacher-rated assessment tools that can be used to measure SEL with preschool through elementary-school children, (3) provide guidance on implementing and assessing SEL in school settings, and (4) explain how to effectively use SEL assessment tools to monitor students’ progress toward achieving SEL goals.

*AIR-CASEL Teacher Rating of Student Social and Emotional Competence (Appendix A)*
This measure was developed by the CASEL Preschool through Elementary School Assessment Work Group and is used to evaluate CASEL’s National Collaborating Districts Initiative. It is designed to be used by teachers in grade K-5 to provide an assessment of students’ functioning across the 5 competency domains in the CASEL framework.

Middle school students

*Social-Emotional Learning Assessment Measures for Middle School Youth*³
This report was developed by the Raikes Foundation.
Section C: What criteria could be used when selecting an assessment measure?

Measures for assessing student social and emotional competencies are not one-size-fits-all. Understanding the school community is important when choosing the right tool. Consider the following criteria when selecting a measure for assessing student social and emotional competencies.

Fit with student population

- **Age level.** Assessment measures may have different versions for different age levels.
- **Cultural groups.** Some developers have investigated whether their assessment measure is appropriate for different cultural groups. It is helpful to know the extent to which a given measure has been researched with students who are similar to those that make up the school’s student body.
- **Native languages and/or dialects.** Many assessment measures are translated into different languages and dialects.

Format of assessment measure

Social and emotional competencies can be measured through a wide variety of assessment methods, and many measures are available in multiple formats. Each of the formats below can provide valuable information, and each has strengths and limitations.

- **Behavior rating scales:** Surveys that allow students to self-report about themselves or that allow other informants like families and teachers to provide input about the student.
  - **Pros** — Self-report measures are valuable sources of information about students’ views of themselves.
  - **Cons** — Social desirability can compromise the accuracy of student responses.
- **Systematic behavioral observations:** Directly observing students in natural environments can be a highly valid and scientifically rigorous way of assessing social and emotional competencies.
  - **Pros** — This can help you learn about how students interact with others in a real-world setting like the playground or cafeteria.
  - **Cons** — If it is too resource-intensive to observe students in multiple settings over multiple occasions, using this approach may miss important behaviors. It may also be too time-intensive to learn how to conduct observations, making this approach impractical.
- **Interviews:** Structured interviews are widely used as a way to get information directly from students.
  - **Pros** — Allows students to share information that may be richer and more informative than surveys.
  - **Cons** — Organizing, synthesizing, and summarizing student responses is labor-intensive and requires considerable expertise.

Ease of use

- **Administration time.** An assessment measure is most useful when it can be administered within a reasonable time frame (e.g., 10–20 minutes). SEL measures could be integrated with other data collection efforts to make the best use of the available time for assessment.
Availability of forms for multiple informants. Ideally the list of informants would include family members, teachers, peers, and students themselves, as well as trained independent observers. However, given the demand on resources this requires, it is unlikely that schools will be able to draw upon such a large number of informants. One reason is that it takes more resources.

Even when it is possible, different informants’ ratings of child/adolescent social competence and behavioral and emotional problems may not correlate well with each other. Determine what to do with conflicting information can be difficult. Having multiple informants rate child and adolescent behavior has become a “gold standard” approach to assessment.

Support for administration and scoring

User’s manual. Most assessment measures provide a user’s manual for administering and scoring the measure. Reviewing the manual can clarify whether and how the measure is useful for multiple purposes such as screening, formative assessment, and outcome monitoring.

Scoring protocol. Scoring a measure by hand is labor-intensive, but computer-assisted scoring may come at an additional price. Knowing approximately how much time the scoring requires will help in deciding the added cost is worthwhile.

Professional learning, training, and/or certification. Some measures require professional learning, training, and/or certification for the staff who administer and/or score the measure. Multiple options may be available to ensure that accurate and useful data are collected.

Support for Analyzing, Interpreting, and Reporting Results

Analyzing collected data. Some schools may want to aggregate the data to look at schoolwide results. In other instances the school may want the option of examining classroom-level data. Many measures offer software for analyzing and interpreting the data they collect. Schools may have staff members with expertise to do this on their own. Another option would be to pay a consultant or evaluator.

Interpreting results. Once data analysis is complete, developers may provide guidance on how to interpret the results. Users’ manuals, other documentation, or software may be offered to help with this process. Some measures include benchmarks or norms that help with interpretation of the results.

Reporting results. Easy-to-understand reports from the data collection process can help communicate findings efficiently to the school community. Some measures offer software that can generate such reports. If software is not available or is too expensive, school staff members with expertise in report preparation may be available to help with this task. Otherwise, a consultant or evaluator may be needed.
Costs

A major factor when considering the feasibility of a measure is the cost. Some of the costs include:

- Purchase of the assessment measures themselves.
- The time for staff with appropriate levels of skill and expertise to administer the measure.
- Equipment required to administer the measure effectively.
- Amount of professional learning, training, and/or certification required of staff to learn to administer the measure.
- Time and money related to scoring, analyzing, and reporting results.
### Appendix A: Teacher Ratings of Student Social and Emotional Competence

Think about your student’s behavior over the past three weeks and indicate how often you see the student display each of the behaviors below (Rarely, occasionally, frequently, almost, always)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Item</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-awareness</strong></td>
<td>Is comfortable sharing feelings in a culturally appropriate way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Understands his or her own strengths or weaknesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is able to explain why he or she said or did something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expresses feelings that are appropriate to the situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-management</strong></td>
<td>Can control his or her behavior when angry, frustrated, disappointed,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or excited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accepts when things don't go his or her way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responds constructively to being corrected by teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stays on task even with distractions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social awareness</strong></td>
<td>Responds with empathy to others who are upset.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respects other people’s viewpoints.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respects the property of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Notices and compliments others’ accomplishments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship skills</strong></td>
<td>Works well with others.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joins peer group activities smoothly.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resolves disputes constructively.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gets along well with adults.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsible decision making</strong></td>
<td>Shows the ability to decide between right and wrong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Takes responsibility for his/her own actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responds appropriately to negative peer pressure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Follows classroom rules.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
References


Tool 2.4: Definitions of Important Measurement Concepts

This resource provides definitions of validity, reliability, and bias, all of which are important concepts to understand when selecting an assessment measure.

What is validity?

Assessment measures demonstrate validity when they lead to truthful and accurate conclusions. When developers of assessment measures try to establish validity, they’re trying to answer the question: Does this measure really assess what we say it does?

Comparing the validity of different measures

- Pay close attention to the extent to which a measure’s ability to assess SEL competencies accurately has been determined.
- Some measures have been subjected to more rigorous research to determine their validity than others.
- Avoid measures that have little support for the validity of their conclusions.

What is reliability?

When assessment measures demonstrate reliability, they provide results that are consistent and stable. Results don’t fluctuate from one assessment to the next.

Caveats about reliability

- Individuals can experience growth and setbacks, so the results of an assessment will change if the individual changes. In such instances variable scores over time are due to real change and not unreliable measurement.
- In other instances, the SEL team might be interested in measuring something that can change many times in a given day like someone’s mood, and changes in results from one assessment to the next should be expected.

What is a measure’s bias?

When an assessment measure is biased, differences in the results may occur based on group membership (e.g., students who are members of culturally and linguistically diverse groups).

Causes of measurement bias

- Validity and reliability data are most helpful when they have been established using diverse samples that have similar demographic characteristics to the youth and families in the school community. If not, this could lead to bias. For example, a measure would be biased if it consistently resulted in higher scores for students born in the United States when compared to students whose country of origin is not the United States. This bias could result from the fact...
that when the measure was being developed it did not include students from diverse countries of origin in its sample.

- Bias can also be an issue when students have cultural norms and values that are different from the students in the sample used to develop the measure. Most behaviors (e.g., self-management behaviors) are important for human functioning in a variety of cultures, but the contexts and conditions for displaying these behaviors may differ from one culture to another.¹

**Should valid and reliable measures be adapted?**

- Adapting measures is a complex process that requires skill in psychometrics and test construction.
- Adapting a valid and reliable measure by shortening or “mixing and matching” it with other measures without validating the adapted version can lead to problems.¹
- Another potential problem relates to English language learners in the school. Just translating the measure into a different language may not provide equivalent measures.¹

**Are all measures appropriate for students of different ages?**

The appropriateness of certain assessment techniques changes as students mature and gain proficiency.¹ This is because students achieve more advanced SEL developmental milestones as they learn and mature.

**References**

Tool 2.5: Measuring School Climate

Purpose

This tool is for both SEL teams in schools that do not currently collect school climate data as well as teams in schools that do collect such data. It provides guidance on selecting the right measure and ensuring the measure covers important dimensions of school climate. It also provides a process for reflecting on school climate data once they have been collected.

How to use this tool

This tool includes three sections.

Section A: Considerations for selecting a school climate measure

Section B: Examining the range of concepts captured by school climate measures

Schools that do not currently administer a school climate measure can use this section to determine which aspects of school climate are priorities. Schools that do currently administer a school climate measure can use this section to determine if the measure they use contains items that reflect high-priority dimensions of the school’s academic and social environment.
Section A: Considerations for selecting a school climate measure

The following considerations will be helpful in selecting a school climate measure:

- Reliability and validity
- Stakeholders represented
- Administration time and cost

Reliability and validity

States and school districts have increasingly been using school climate data to understand and support the context for learning. CASEL strongly advocates for the use of scientifically developed school climate surveys that have established reliability and validity.

To assist with the identification of valid and reliable school climate measures, a helpful resource has been developed by the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE). NCSSLE has developed a School Climate Survey Compendium to assist educators and education agencies in identifying student, staff, and family measures that have been tested for validity and reliability.

Stakeholders represented

An important consideration when selecting a school climate measure is whether it can capture information from a school’s core stakeholder groups: students, families, school staff, and, if possible, the wider community. In this way collecting school climate data can provide a unique opportunity for students, families, and community members to have a role in school improvement. The SEL team should consider whether climate surveys under consideration are offered in the predominant languages used by students and their families.

Administration time and cost

A range of climate survey tools are available for purchase at varying costs. Some measures provide additional support such as guides and manuals that help ensure proper use and interpretation, software to create reports, or technical assistance to help analyze and organize the data. Although additional support is likely to add to the cost, it may be necessary for schools that do not have the capacity to analyze survey data and develop reports.

Section B: Concepts measured by school climate instruments

School climate instruments measure a range of concepts that reflect various aspects of a school’s academic and social environment. The following table lists concepts that are commonly assessed by school climate measures. The constructs are grouped according to five dimensions of school climate.

- Safety
- Relationships
- Teaching and Learning
- Institutional Environment
School Improvement Process

The SEL team can use this chart to identify which of the constructs are priorities. Once priorities are identified, the team can determine whether a survey they are considering or already using contains relevant items.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Priority?</th>
<th>In current or proposed survey?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Safety</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical safety</td>
<td>How physically safe students feel in the building and around other students and staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and emotional safety</td>
<td>How emotionally safe students feel, reports of bullying, harassment, racial climate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules, norms, discipline</td>
<td>Perceived fairness of school’s approach to student behavior and discipline practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk behaviors</td>
<td>Reports of student engagement in high-risk behaviors including physical risks, substance use, and sexual behaviors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationships</strong></td>
<td>Are relationships between and among students and adults supportive and respectful?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-teacher relationships</td>
<td>Feelings of support and respect in student-teacher interactions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer relationships</td>
<td>Feelings of connectedness and respect among students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher working relationships</td>
<td>Trusting, respectful, and supportive relationships among teachers and staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student social and emotional learning</td>
<td>Students demonstration of social and emotional competencies in the school environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural responsiveness</td>
<td>Whether students feel the school embraces and supports cultural diversity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching and Learning</strong></td>
<td>Does the school provide high-quality curriculum and instruction to support academic, social, and emotional skills?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rigor/expectations</td>
<td>Coursework and academic expectations that challenge students to do their best</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and emotional learning instruction</td>
<td>Curriculum and instruction that supports the development of social and emotional competencies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional Effectiveness</strong></td>
<td>Is the school’s social and physical environment conducive to social and academic growth?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectedness/engagement</td>
<td>Students’ feelings of connection to faculty, fellow students, and the school itself</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical surroundings</td>
<td>Quality of school physical facilities and perceptions of environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Priority?</td>
<td>In current or proposed survey?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Improvement Process</td>
<td>Are school practices and systems collaborative, coherent, and supported?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program coherence</td>
<td>Agreement and alignment on school-based practices and initiatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional capacity</td>
<td>Teachers’ perceptions of having the support to succeed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent-school-community ties</td>
<td>The school’s involvement and inclusion of families and community partners in school culture and activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References
Tool 2.6: Developing Goals for Schoolwide SEL

Purpose

The purpose of this tool is to help the SEL team develop and document goals for student and climate outcomes for schoolwide SEL.

How to use this tool

This tool presents the “SMART” goal-setting process. It also includes a template that can be used to document goals.

The tool is designed to be used in conjunction with the school’s vision statement and Tool 2.1: School Strengths Inventory. The information from these tools can be used to prioritize the goals for schoolwide SEL.

After defining the school’s SEL goals using the reflection questions in this tool, the SEL team can get input from the rest of the school community to refine and finalize the goals.

SMART goals are a useful link between a resources and needs assessment and an action plan. We recommend integrating the school’s SEL goals with Tool 1.2: Developing a Schoolwide Implementation Plan. SMART goals can also be included in other school improvement processes.

SMART Goals for Schoolwide SEL

Answers to these questions will help to ensure that goals are SMART:

- **Specific:**
  Does each goal clearly state what is to be accomplished and for whom? Where appropriate, does it specify where and by whom activities should be carried out?

- **Measurable:**
  Does each goal refer to a measurable outcome? Does it set a standard that will allow the team to know whether or not the goal has been met?

- **Attainable:**
  Does the goal seem reachable given where the school is now?

- **Realistic/Relevant:**
  Will attaining this goal make a difference in the quality of students’ lives? Is the goal aligned with other school improvement goals?

- **Timely:**
  Has a timeframe been established for achieving the goal? Have shorter-term benchmarks been set so progress can be monitored along the way?
Reflection Questions for Setting SMART Goals

- What is supposed to change as a result of schoolwide SEL implementation?
  - How will schoolwide SEL enhance students’ social and emotional skills, competencies, and dispositions?
  - How will it enhance academic performance?
  - How will it positively impact school climate?
  - How will it impact teacher effectiveness?
  - How will it strengthen partnerships between the school and families?

- Who is supposed to change as a result of schoolwide SEL?
  - Are changes expected for students?
  - Are changes expected for other members of the school community? Teachers? School administration? Families? Community members?

- How much change is expected?
  - What magnitude of change would indicate that a difference is being made?

- When will the change occur?
  - How long would it the desired changes take (e.g., six months, one year)?
  - By what specific date would the change be projected to happen?

- How will the changes be measured?
  - What are any existing measures (e.g., surveys, administrative data) that can aid in measuring change?
  - What would signify that “change happened” (e.g., integrating SEL into daily functioning of the school, teachers using an evidence-based SEL program, school staff interacting more positively with each other)?
Examples of SMART Goals for Student and Climate Outcomes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal for Student Social and Emotional Competence</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What will change?</strong></td>
<td>Students’ ability to make better decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>For whom?</strong></td>
<td>Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>By how much?</strong></td>
<td>Reduce discipline referrals by 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>When will the change occur?</strong></td>
<td>Over a school year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How will it be measured?</strong></td>
<td>Assessment of students’ SEL competencies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Example of a goal statement that incorporates all of the SMART criteria:* Increase student ability to solve problems in peaceful ways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal for Student Behavior</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What will change?</strong></td>
<td>Students’ contribution to the well-being of the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>For whom?</strong></td>
<td>Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>By how much?</strong></td>
<td>Increase student participation by 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>When will the change occur?</strong></td>
<td>Within the school year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How will it be measured?</strong></td>
<td>Track student participation in service-learning projects.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Example of a goal statement that incorporates all of the SMART criteria:* Increase student ability to solve problems in peaceful ways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal for Climate</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What will change?</strong></td>
<td>The classroom climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>For whom?</strong></td>
<td>Students and teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>By how much?</strong></td>
<td>Increase positive survey responses by 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>When will the change occur?</strong></td>
<td>Within the school year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How will it be measured?</strong></td>
<td>Survey staff and students in September and May</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Example of a goal statement that incorporates all of the SMART criteria:* Develop a safe, supportive, and caring learning climate for all learners by enhancing positive relationships among staff to staff and among teachers and students.
### Smart Goals for Student and Climate Outcomes of Schoolwide SEL

#### Goal for Student Social and Emotional Competence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal Statement:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What will change?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For whom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By how much?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When will the change occur?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will it be measured?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How will this goal be achieved?**

---

#### Goal for Student Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal Statement:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What will change?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For whom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By how much?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When will the change occur?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will it be measured?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How will this goal be achieved?**

---

#### Goal for Climate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal Statement:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What will change?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For whom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By how much?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When will the change occur?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will it be measured?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How will this goal be achieved?**
Chapter 3 Tools

Tool 3.1: Developing Awareness of Instructional Practices that Promote SEL .................................................. 2
- Developing Awareness of Current Practices that Promote SEL ................................................................. 3
- Instructional Practices that Promote SEL ...................................................................................................... 4
- Instructional Practices to Enhance .............................................................................................................. 7

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Tool 3.3: Recommended SEL Readings .......................................................................................................... 12

Tool 3.4: Social Emotional Focused Learning Walk ....................................................................................... 17
Tool 3.1: Developing Awareness of Instructional Practices that Promote SEL

Purpose

This tool is designed to help teachers think about routine instructional strategies that can help create relationship-centered classrooms that nurture and support social and emotional learning. The tool is intended for reflection only and not for evaluation purposes.

How to use this tool

This tool can be used to reflect on whether or not the routine practices teachers use support social and emotional learning. It can be helpful in identifying personal strengths and planning how to build on those strengths.

This tool is divided into three sections:

- Section 1: Developing Awareness of Current Practices that Promote SEL
- Section 2: Instructional Practices that Promote SEL
- Section 3: Instructional Practices to Enhance SEL

Section 1: Developing Awareness of Current Practices that Promote SEL. The first section presents open-ended questions that can be used by individual teachers to develop awareness of SEL instructional practices they routinely use. It could also be used to spark discussion in a group setting such as a faculty meeting, committee meeting, or SEL team meeting.

Another way to use the first section is in a group setting. Charts could be made with one question on each chart, and these charts could be posted on the wall. Teachers could then work in small groups to brainstorm practices they use. The groups can then rotate among all the charts. Questions and checklists can be used from one area of the discussion topic, e.g., “What might that look like in my grade or subject?”

Section 2: Instructional Strategies that Promote SEL. After reflecting on their own instructional practices, teachers can use the second section to consider new strategies. Ideally use of this section will be preceded by an opportunity for reflection and discussion of the first section.

Section 3: Instructional Practices to Enhance SEL. The third section encourages teachers to think about which of the new practices they want to develop.
Developing Awareness of Current Practices that Promote SEL

Many aspects of teachers’ routine practices can promote SEL. After answering the questions below, rate the accompanying indicators in the pages that follow to add to the list of routine practices teachers can use to promote SEL and identify areas that provide an opportunity to grow.

- **Self-Awareness:** What do you do to nurture each student’s awareness of his/her thinking, feelings, and understanding as he/she is learning, such as being aware of the feelings and viewpoints of others?

- **Self-Management:** What do you do to nurture students’ ability to manage emotions, control impulses, deal with stress, and achieve goals?

- **Social Awareness:** What do you do to cultivate students’ ability to appreciate diversity, take various perspectives, feel empathy for others, and demonstrate respect?

- **Relationship Skills:** What do you do to foster students’ ability to communicate effectively, engage socially, build relationships, work cooperatively, and resolve conflicts creatively?

- **Responsible Decision-Making:** What do you do to nurture students’ ethical behavior and decision-making?
**Instructional Practices that Promote SEL**

This section provides examples of specific teaching methods that may be part of current instructional practice. As you read the list, place a check in the column that indicates how often you use the method. In order to expand instructional practice, it would be appropriate to identify the area and the methods you would like to begin using more frequently and develop an action plan for implementation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher practices that nurture self-awareness of students’ thinking, feelings, and understanding</th>
<th>Frequency of Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide opportunities for students to reflect individually and collectively on their learning and describe what was meaningful and what questions emerged.</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invite students to recognize and articulate their strengths, needs, and values as well as areas for growth.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model optimism and hope while developing a classroom climate that supports a “can do” attitude.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Model asking for help and provide students with concrete examples.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set attainable goals with students that are reachable so they can develop self-efficacy and trust that they can be successful reaching goals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a variety of learning opportunities for students to identify and express emotions constructively.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer positive and specific feedback that is timely, constructive, and provides students with guidance needed to improve performance and contribute to a caring and respectful classroom.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model thinking skills and help students develop their own.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Teacher practices to nurture students’ ability to manage emotions, control impulses, deal with stress, and achieve goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Use</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate with students to set norms for how students will work together and manage their own behaviors.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish smooth functioning of all routines by clearly identifying the students’ roles.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hold class meetings to establish relationships and to solve problems related to behavior and academics.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach students how to use effective self-talk and stress-reduction approaches to manage their emotions and impulses and focus on the completion of learning tasks.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Offer choice in how students complete tasks and can comfortably suggest modifications or additions to the materials being used.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engage students in setting goals and developing organizational skills to complete tasks.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Involve students in establishing criteria for evaluating their work and provide guidelines for students to assess their own work and make improvements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Structure record-keeping so students can keep track of their progress and monitor their assignments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Before beginning a lesson practice mindfulness strategies in order to calm emotions and focus attention.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Set attainable goals with students that are reachable so they can develop self-efficacy and a belief that they can be successful reaching goals.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Teach strategies for calming down and attending as needed.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Teacher practices that cultivate students’ ability to appreciate diversity, take various perspectives, feel empathy, and demonstrate respect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Use</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Know the unique background and needs of students and plan lessons so students learn and express their learning in a variety of ways.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide students with opportunities to explore a variety of perspectives on an issue, event, conflict, or decision.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide opportunities for students to recognize and label their emotions and the emotions of others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Structure lessons in literature and social science that enable students to identify decisions and the effect on others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design lessons that are engaging, culturally relevant, conducive to critical thinking, and connected to life beyond school.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasize cultural competencies in the classroom.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display a wide range of student work that reflects the diverse learning styles and levels of all students.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask students what is happening in their lives beyond school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design learning experiences that foster empathy, such as class meetings, powerful reading and media, service-learning opportunities, etc.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher practices that foster students’ ability to communicate effectively, engage socially, build relationships, work cooperatively, and resolve conflicts creatively</td>
<td>Frequency of Use</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greet students by name when they enter the class and during lessons. Encourage students to address each other by name.</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen actively, take turns, and speak respectfully in all classroom interactions.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use body language and nonverbal cues that communicate caring, concern, and openness.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate clear expectations for learning, participation, and high-quality work, including how each student will be supported to be successful.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize cooperative student groups with norms of engagement to maximize learning and teamwork.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model and reinforce respectful communication in all interactions with adults and students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use an approach to resolving conflicts in the classroom consistently and encourage students to use it in their daily interactions.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage students to ask questions and seek help during learning tasks.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide opportunities for students to offer help to classmates who may need additional support on a learning task.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher practices that nurture ethical behavior and decision-making</th>
<th>Frequency of Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model thinking skills and help students develop their own.</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model a high level of honesty, integrity, and confidentiality.</td>
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<td>Make a concerted effort to ensure opportunities are available for all students to be successful.</td>
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<td>Teach students to think of the consequences of their decisions for others and the environment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Help students learn to suspend judgment and gather information before reacting to another person.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage students to consider a variety of viewpoints and cultural differences when making decisions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide opportunities for class discussion about ethics at an appropriate developmental level.</td>
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</table>
Instructional Practices to Enhance

Develop action steps for practices you would like to refine or begin using. Identify the area, practice, action steps, and reflection on progress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>PRACTICE</th>
<th>ACTION STEPS</th>
<th>REFLECTION</th>
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</table>
Tool 3.2: Improving SEL Implementation with a Professional Learning Community

Purpose

The purpose of this tool is to provide a process for utilizing a professional learning community approach to embed SEL into the everyday functioning of the school.

How to use this tool

This tool provides a set of reflection questions that will help participants in a professional learning community refine their approach and improve SEL implementation. After reflecting on these questions and developing responses, they can use this information to inform a professional learning plan.

Improving SEL implementation using a professional learning process

Effective professional learning has a significant impact on school improvement when there is a shared vision, when there is a process for connecting data to classroom instruction, when goals are clear, and when collaborative processes for accomplishing the goals are well-established. Reflection questions that can help professional learning communities address priorities are:

- What do we want to do?
- How will we do it?
- How will we know when we are successful?
- What will we do if the data indicates no change or limited progress?
- How will we respond when the data shows that the goal has been accomplished?

We recommend that professional learning communities using this Guide focus their reflection on the school’s goals for SEL.

Listed below are examples of goals focused on schoolwide SEL. Each goal is based on research cited in a text box but should also be based on student or school needs.

Example 1: Creating a Safe and Supporting Climate and Culture

| Students will work for teachers when they perceive that the teacher believes in them, communicates they can be successful, provides the learning support that promotes individual growth, and provides students with opportunities to have a voice in the classroom structure as well as how they learn. A supportive, caring climate and culture is essential for creating a learning environment that promotes a caring community of learners. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do we want to do?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All staff will work to ensure a safe supportive, learning environment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How will we do it?

- Use a book study learning community approach and read *The Power of Our Words: Teacher Language that Helps Children Learn* (see Resource 3.2: Recommended SEL Resources and Readings) in order to develop a common language, improve relationships with students, and encourage connectedness to school.
- Each certified staff member will complete Tool 1.5: Personal Assessment and Reflection – SEL Competencies for School Leaders, Staff, and Adults and reflect independently and with colleagues on how to enhance their own SEL competencies in a nonevaluative way.

How will we know when we are successful?

- Collect results from a climate survey to determine student, staff, and family-community perspectives about the climate. Hold focus groups and discuss climate perceptions with students before and after implementing strategies from the book study.

What will we do if the data indicates no change in the classroom or building climate and culture?

- Discuss successes and challenges, share what works, and use peer observation to obtain feedback on student and teacher interactions.
- Work with students to set classroom and schoolwide shared agreements.
- Set a personal goal to improve an SEL competency that promotes positive relationships with staff and students.
- Reflect and collect new data.

How will we respond when the data shows that the climate is safe and supportive for all learners?

- Continue to implement the successful practices.
- Connect SEL competencies to the school’s teaching framework.
- Continue to assess climate and/or hold focus groups once a year.

Examples 2 and 3: Align SEL with Instructional Practices for English Language Arts and Math

> Although creating a safe, supportive learning environment is critical to support student growth, implementing rigorous curriculum with instructional strategies that promote student engagement is also a key factor in improved student learning. Teaching the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the social and emotional competencies increases the likelihood that students will successfully hit the learning target. This goal is critical when the school has determined a need to align the SEL competencies with the CCSS classroom objectives.

**Using a professional learning community to align English Language Arts with SEL**

What do we want to do?

- Teach students (CCSS ELA, grades 3-5) how to develop a deeper understanding of one’s emotions and how those emotions affect the actions of oneself and others by describing in depth the character’s emotions and actions and how they influenced the story outcome.
How will we do this?
- Use an evidenced-based SEL program to teach students how to recognize, label, and describe emotions.
- Use strategies such as role playing to help students learn about different emotions.
- In a guided reading lesson model how to identify the main character’s emotions, actions, and their impact on the people and events in the story. Give examples from the text.
- Chart the character’s emotions and actions from the start to the end of the text and provide evidence from the text in group discussions.
- Develop a formative assessment with clear targets to assess student progress toward this goal.

How will we know when students are learning the goal?
- Assess through observations.
- Track student responses in discussion groups.
- Assess student progress.

What will we do if students are not learning the goal?
- Reteach, model, and use a variety of instructional practices that enable students to engage with the text.
- Ask students to articulate what they think impedes their learning and what would help them be more successful in their learning process.
- Read smaller chunks of text that make it easier to identify, label, and cite examples of emotions and their impact on actions.
- Have students illustrate different emotions with art or writing.
- Reassess progress.

What will we do when students understand the impact of emotions on actions?
- Ask students to describe how they will apply this knowledge in real-world settings.
- Apply this knowledge to developing a deeper understanding of outcomes from the text being studied.

Using the professional learning community to align mathematics with SEL

What do we want to do?
- Teach students how to make sense of algebraic equations and persevere in solving them.

How will we do this?
- Set clear expectations for student learning and communicate how the teacher will support the learning process.
- Clearly state the learning target which might be having students write expressions in equivalent forms to solve a problem, create equations that describe numbers or relationships, or solve systems of equations.
- Provide instruction and model how to interpret the structure.
- Structure cooperative learning groups so students can complete the learning object, explain their reasoning, present a viable argument supporting the process they used, make adjustments when necessary, and rework the problem.
• Provide students with opportunities for personal reflection on how they dealt with their own levels of attention, focus, and motivation; feelings of frustration, boredom, anxiety, or excitement; and thoughts about being a math learner as well as group reflection on what skills were required for successful collaboration in completing the learning object.

• Assess student progress toward this learning objective.

What will we do if students are not successful in meeting the learning target?

• Communicate that learning is a process that involves time, and the goal is for students to be successful. Engaging in the learning process requires focus and patience.

• Ask students to articulate what they think impedes their learning and what would help them be more successful in their learning process.

• Re-teach the concept with examples that include the thinking of the teacher.

• Break instruction into parts.

• Structure opportunities for students to practice with guidance and opportunities to explain their thinking.

• Provide peer tutoring as appropriate.

• Reassess students’ progress.

What will we do when students demonstrate perseverance in their ability to stick with the problem until it is learned?

• Have students list the personal and social factors that helped them persevere in solving a difficult problem.

• Apply these factors in new learning situations.

• Connect this learning objective to future learning targets.

References


Tool 3.3: Recommended SEL Readings

Purpose

This tool provides reading materials that can help to deepen knowledge about different SEL-related topics and address questions the school community may have about SEL.

How to Use This Tool

These resources can be used in a variety of ways:

- Review this list and select several readings to start building knowledge of SEL.
- Select a title or several articles from this list for use in a faculty meeting or a book study group.
- Provide some of these books in the school library for staff, parents, or others interested in learning more about specific aspects of SEL.

This list is a just a starting point. Many more readings and resources are available on CASEL’s website at www.casel.org.

This list is organized around the following topic areas:

- Introduction to SEL
- Leading change
- SEL curriculum and instruction
- SEL standards
- SEL assessment
- Schoolwide practices and policies
- Family and community partnerships
- Cultural relevance
- Adult SEL

Introduction to SEL


**Leading Change**


**SEL Curriculum and Instruction**


Zakrzewsk, Vicki (January 22, 2014), *How to Integrate SEL Into Common Core*. The Greater Good Science Center, http://greatergood.berkely.edu


**SEL Standards**


**SEL assessment**


**Climate and Culture**


Mersky, Laura (2011) *Building Safer, Saner Schools*, Educational Leadership, September 2011, pp 45-59, ASCD.


Zakraewsk, Vicki (august 21, 2013) *How to Create a Positive School Climate*, The Greater Good Science Center, [http://greatergood.berkely.edu](http://greatergood.berkely.edu)

**School, Family, and Community Partnerships**


Bradberry, Travis; Greaves, Jean (2009). *Emotional intelligence 2.0*. Talent Smart, San Diego, CA


PTA’s National Standards for Family-School Partnerships. www.pta.org


Cultural Relevance


Adult SEL

Tool 3.4: SEL Focused Learning Walk

Purpose

This tool provides a protocol for nonevaluative “learning walks” that focus on social and emotional learning. Information gathered during these walks provides a picture of how well the school as a whole is progressing with SEL.

How to use this tool

As schools implement schoolwide SEL, classroom observations that are not evaluative in nature can provide helpful information to improve the teaching of explicit SEL skills and the promotion of a supportive school and classroom environment. This process is best completed by a small group in a variety of different classrooms.

Staff should always be aware of when learning walks are scheduled.

A classroom walk through may be completed by a group of administrators, coaches, or teachers who know the five SEL competencies well enough to model, teach, and integrate the SEL skills in curriculum areas and instructional practices.

Starting the process

- A group facilitator will assemble the participants and indicate the procedures to follow, including the focus of the learning walk, the classrooms that will be visited, and why these classrooms were chosen for observation.
- The facilitator leads a brief discussion about the SEL core competencies and the indicators on page 3 of this tool (Behavior and Language that Demonstrate SEL Competencies). This allows participants to provide evidence during later reflection on what they saw in the classroom that supports SEL.
- Participants discuss what evidence to look for and how to use the feedback form.

Learning walk process:

- All team members enter the classroom at the same time without talking to one another.
- Members remain in the back of the room unless they have been asked to talk with students or look at student work.
- Unless otherwise directed, the team may make brief notes while in the room.
- All members leave at an agreed-upon time.

Short debriefing

- Walk a distance from the classroom and debrief observations.
- Proceed to the next classroom after team members have shared their observations.
Final debriefing

- Team participants gather in an agreed-upon location.
- Each member reviews his/her observations, citing specific evidence and observations.
- Together, the participants identify trends, strengths, needs, and areas that need improvement.
- The participants make suggestions for how to improve what they observed.
- The facilitator takes notes, gathers the feedback forms, and decides how to provide feedback to the teachers.
# Behavior and Language that Demonstrate SEL Competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEL Competencies</th>
<th>Classroom Indicator Examples</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Awareness:</strong></td>
<td>Students:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accurately assesses one’s feelings, interests, values and strengths, maintaining a well-grounded sense of self-confidence</td>
<td>• Reflect on their progress as a learner</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Express what is easy or hard about the academic discussion and why</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Ask for help when needed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Identify one’s role and responsibilities during academic discussions</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Self-management:</strong></td>
<td>Students:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulates one’s emotions to handle stress, control impulses, and persevere in overcoming obstacles; sets and monitors progress toward personal and academic goals; expresses emotions appropriately</td>
<td>• Manage and expresses emotions and thoughts in a constructive way</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Stay engaged in a discussion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Use “I” messages appropriately in discussions</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Social awareness:</strong></td>
<td>Students:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is able to take the perspective of and emphasize with others; recognizes and appreciates individual and group similarities and differences; recognizes and uses family, school, and community resources</td>
<td>• Listen attentively to others</td>
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<td>• Respectfully paraphrase others’ ideas</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Engage collaboratively with others</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Are able to take the perspective of others different from oneself</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Add to or build on the ideas of others</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship skills:</strong></td>
<td>Students:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishes and maintains healthy and rewarding relationships based on cooperation; resists inappropriate social pressures; prevents, manages, and resolves interpersonal conflict; seeks help when needed</td>
<td>• Communicate clearly and effectively with people different from oneself</td>
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<td>• Engage in constructive arguments</td>
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<td>• Give and receive constructive feedback</td>
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<td>• Listen, encourage, acknowledge, compromise, and work toward consensus</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Value collaboration</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ask questions based on careful listening</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Responsible decision-making:</strong></td>
<td>Students:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes decisions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, appropriate social norms, respect for others, and likely consequences of various actions; applies decision-making skills to academic and social situations, contributes to the well-being of one’s school and community</td>
<td>• Follow the classroom norms</td>
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<td>• Actively participate in a group decision-making process</td>
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<td>• Generate alternative ideas and solutions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Asks “why” and “what if” questions</td>
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<td>• Demonstrate an understanding of what is best for the group</td>
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### Individual Feedback Form for Social and Emotional Learning Walk

**Date**

**Focus Questions:**
- What evidence showed that students were effectively practicing the SEL core competencies?
- What evidence showed that students were struggling with an SEL core competency?
- What conditions contributed to students’ use of the core competencies?
- What were some wonderings?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence that supports a focus on the SEL core competencies.</th>
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<th>Evidence that shows students were struggling with the SEL core competencies.</th>
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<th>Evidence of conditions that contribute to students using the core competencies.</th>
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<th>Evidence of conditions that would have supported SEL but were missing.</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Some things I wondered about.</th>
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Chapter 4 Tools

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**Tool 4.4: Planning for Professional Learning on Evidence-based Programs** ................................................... 18
  Sample Professional Learning Plan .................................................................................................................. 22
Tool 4.1: Aligning Goals and Priorities

Purpose

This tool is designed to help the SEL team establish priorities that will guide the selection of an evidence-based SEL program(s).

How to use this tool

The process for establishing priorities for schoolwide SEL begins with a review of the school’s goals for SEL and school improvement. This tool is designed to guide the SEL team in identifying priorities for programs that could achieve those goals.

The final section summarizes the SEL team’s decisions. The team can share this with the broader school community to get their feedback.

List goals for schoolwide SEL and/or school improvement goals:

*These may have been developed using Tool 2.6: Developing Goals for Schoolwide SEL*

<table>
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<th>Goals for Schoolwide SEL and/or school improvement goals</th>
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Establish priorities for the evidence-based SEL program

Use the following questions to guide team discussion. The team’s answers and decisions can be recorded on the form at the end of this tool.

- **In order to ensure that all students receive education in SEL, what grade levels and ages need to be reached with the evidence-based SEL program?**

  CASEL recommends universal SEL programming for all students in the school. In some instances schools may prefer to start implementing evidence-based SEL programs at one or more grade levels and add grade levels over time.

- **What are the demographics and cultures represented in the student and family population?**

  It would be ideal if a program had been designed specifically for students from the geographic area and cultures represented in the school. The reality, however, is that every school is more or less unique in terms of specific cultures and ethnicities represented in its student population. Programs simply have not been designed to meet the needs of every possible ethnic and cultural group. It is therefore important consider how well a particular program would likely meet the needs of the school community. At the very least a program should be culturally neutral so that teachers can provide examples that are relevant to engage their students.

- **What is the realistic amount of instructional time (or range of time) that can be dedicated each week to SEL?**

- **What approach to SEL is likely to work best for the school?**

  Some programs focus more on skills instruction while others may focus more on instructional practices that promote SEL. Which of these approaches is more likely to fit with the school?

- **Who will be responsible for implementing the SEL program?**

  We recommend that classroom teachers be primarily responsible for implementing SEL in order to reinforce SEL throughout the school day.

- **What is the budget available for program materials and professional learning?**

- **How will the school partner with families to promote SEL, and does the program fit with this plan?**

  Many evidence-based SEL programs offer family components, but these vary in structure and intensity. Having a clear understanding of the school’s goals for partnering with families will help narrow the range of program options.
### Summarizing priorities for the evidence-based SEL program

Use this summary of priorities to help assess how well programs meet the needs of the school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of priorities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What grade levels and ages need to be reached with the evidence-based SEL program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the demographics and cultures represented in the student and parent population that need to be addressed by the program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the realistic amount of instructional time that can be dedicated each week to SEL?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much professional learning time can the school allocate to the evidence-based program specifically?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What approach to SEL is likely to work best for the school?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who will be responsible for implementing the SEL program?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the budget available for program materials and professional learning specific to the program?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will the school partner with families to promote SEL, and how does the program fit with this plan?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other key priorities for the school or district (please specify)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tool 4.2: Identifying Evidence-Based SEL Programs

Purpose

This tool is designed to help identify a variety of evidence-based SEL programs that could achieve the school’s goals for schoolwide SEL.

How to use this tool

All the resources presented in this tool are available online at no cost. The tool discusses how each one can be used to search for evidence-based programs.

- **Identifying evidence-based SEL programs for students in preschool through elementary school.**
  

- **Identifying evidence-based SEL programs for students in middle and high school.**
  
  CASEL is in the process of completing a second online resource that will focus on secondary SEL programs. This resource, titled the *2013 CASEL Guide: Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs — Secondary School Edition* identifies evidence-based programs for students in grades 6-12.

- **Identifying evidence-based programs more broadly.**
  
  A third set of online resources reviews evidence-based programs more broadly. These resources include topics that are relevant to and overlap with SEL. More details may be found in the following discussion about secondary program resources.

  1. Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development
  2. California Healthy Kids
  3. IES What Works Clearinghouse
  4. LINKS—Lifecourse Intervention to Nurture Kids Successfully
  5. National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP)
  6. Social Programs that Work (Coalition of Evidence Based Policy)

All of these resources can be used in conjunction with Tool 4.3: Reviewing Evidence-Based SEL Programs.

Identifying evidence-based SEL programs for students in preschool through elementary school

*The 2013 CASEL Guide: Preschool and Elementary School Edition* focuses on:

- Universal school-based SEL programs that are intended for all students.
• Programs that can be delivered by existing school personnel during the regular school day.

The programs in this guide have meet three requirements:

• They are **well-designed classroom-based programs** that systematically promote students’ social and emotional competence, provide opportunities for practice, and offer multiyear programming.
• They include **high-quality professional learning** and other implementation supports, including initial training and ongoing support to ensure sound implementation.
• They have at least one carefully conducted **evaluation that documents positive impacts** on student behavior and/or academic performance.

For each program in the guide information includes:

• Evidence of the program’s effectiveness.
• Whether the program provides broad coverage of SEL.
• Grade range covered.
• Average number of sessions.
• Classroom approach to teaching SEL.
• Opportunities to practice.
• Programming that connects to other contexts in order to promote and reinforce SEL.
• Professional learning.
• Assessment tools for monitoring implementation and student behavior.
• Other considerations.

The guide includes comparison tables for both preschool programs and elementary school programs. The guide also provides a detailed description of each program and a summary of its ratings.

**Identifying evidence-based programs for students in middle through high school**

Until CASEL’s secondary program guide is available, no search tool exists specifically to identify middle and high school evidence-based SEL programs. The various reviews identified previously address topics that are important to and overlap with SEL. Because these online resources are not limited to SEL programs we recommend paying close attention to whether each potential program promotes a broad range of social and emotional competencies.

**Blueprints for Violence Prevention—Model and Promising Programs**

**Focus:** Violence and drug abuse prevention

**Comments and Search Tips**

All of the Model and Promising Programs have evidence of effectiveness. Promising Programs have at least one evaluation that has shown desired effects using a valid research design. Model programs have shown effects as well, but these effects have also been shown to be sustained over time and through multiple replications.
Blueprints has an “Interactive Program Selection” button in the menu bar that directs users to a page where they can define their search using helpful dropdown menus. The “Choose a Target Age” option allows schools to select early adolescence (12-14) or late adolescence (15-19). Several program types are likely to be relevant, including cognitive-behavioral, social skills training, and school-based program. The “Choose a Blueprints Type” option can help limit a search to model or promising programs, but we suggest looking at both types, keeping in mind that Model programs have stronger evidence of effectiveness.

**California Healthy Kids—Research Validated Programs**

**Focus:** Health promotion and risk reduction

**Comments and Search Tips:**
The table under the heading “CHKRC Research-Validated Programs At-A-Glance” lists all research-validated programs. The yellow column titled “RV Grade Ranges” shows the grade levels that have been evaluated. Other columns indicate which health outcomes have been demonstrated in evaluation studies. Clicking on the program name will provide details about the program, including its description, information about cost, and research findings.


**Focus:** Education

**Comments and Search Tips**
The “Find What Works” box on the left side of the page is a good place to start searching. We recommend checking the box for programs with an intervention report. The topic “Personal/Social Development” in the dropdown menu of the search box is especially relevant. There is also an option to check “with evidence of effectiveness” under the “Find What Works” box. This will lead to a page with search results that allows the addition of other search criteria, including “Grade” and “Delivery Method” (including “Whole Class” and “Whole School,” as opposed to “Individual” or “Small Group”).

**LINKS—LifeCourse Intervention to Nurture Kids Successfully** (Child Trends)

**Focus:** Programs to enhance child development.

**Comments and Search Tips**
The “Select Programs by Specific Criteria” feature supports narrowing a search according to a range of criteria. Under “Target Population,” the “Age Group” category specifies Adolescents (12-17) and/or Youth (16+). Under “Program Characteristics,” the “Program Setting” option can be set to “school-based.” Users may also want to select a “Program Type” (for example, “Skills Training” or “Service-Learning”). Under “Outcome,” users may want to “Select All Social/Emotional Health.” After submitting
key words, the search will return a list of programs that meet the selected criteria. Clicking on the name of each program provides a description and details about the program’s design and summaries of evaluation findings.

**National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP)**

**Focus:** Mental Health Promotion, Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment

**Comments and Search Tips**
Users can enter “social emotional learning” in the “Find an Intervention” box or click on the “advanced search” button to define the search according to a variety of factors, including “Areas of Interest” (e.g., “mental health promotion”), “Ages,” and “Settings” (scroll down to select “school”). Clicking on “intervention title” provides descriptive information, cost, summaries and findings of research studies and other useful details.

**Social Programs that Work** (Coalition of Evidence Based Policy)

**Focus:** Social programs proven through research

**Comments and Search Tips:**
Top Tier and Near Top Tier programs are listed at the bottom of the page. “Education (K-12)” programs will likely be most relevant, but others may also be helpful (for example, “Youth Development,” “Crime/Violence Prevention” and “Substance Abuse Prevention”). Clicking on “evidence summary here” in the brief description of each program will provide additional details, including a description of the intervention and evidence of effectiveness.
Tool 4.3: Reviewing Evidence-Based SEL Programs

Purpose

This tool is designed to help SEL teams explore evidence-based SEL programs more deeply.

How to use this tool

The first part of the tool is a worksheet that should be completed for each program under review. Following the worksheet are instructions on how to answer each of the items. Use completed worksheets to make more detailed comparisons between programs the SEL team is considering.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence-based Social and Emotional Learning Program Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of program: __________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Goal of the program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Approach program uses for social-emotional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Where and how the program provides opportunities for students to practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Grade levels for which program is appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Evidence of the program’s effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Professional learning to support the program (PL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ongoing support for implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Tools for monitoring implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Tools for monitoring outcomes</td>
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<td>----------------------------------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>11. Comments about program materials</th>
<th>High-quality materials</th>
<th>Average quality materials</th>
<th>Low-quality materials</th>
<th>Info not available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12. Comments about cultural relevance</th>
<th>High level of cultural relevance to our student population</th>
<th>Average level of cultural relevance to our student population</th>
<th>Low level of cultural relevance to our student population</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>13. Guidance for integration and differentiation</th>
<th>Strong guidance for integration and differentiation</th>
<th>Average guidance for integration and differentiation</th>
<th>Low level of guidance for integration and differentiation</th>
<th>Info not available</th>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>14. Family component</th>
<th>High-quality family component</th>
<th>Average quality family component</th>
<th>Low-quality family component</th>
<th>Info not available</th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>15. Community Component</th>
<th>High-quality community component</th>
<th>Average quality community component</th>
<th>Low-quality community component</th>
<th>Info not available</th>
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<tr>
<td>16. Feedback from others who have experience with the program</td>
<td>Highly recommended</td>
<td>Recommended</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Recommended against</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| 17. Does the program provide guidelines for integrating with academics, discipline and student support? Please specify. | |
| 18. How well might the program integrate with identified school priorities, including CCSS? | |

Other Considerations
Instructions for completing the Evidence-Based SEL Program Summary

Please use the following questions to answer each of the items on the form.

1. Goal of the program

Simply stated, what is the purpose of the program? Is it explicitly defined as an SEL program? What are the program’s stated objectives? Does it develop problem solving or build community? Does it develop social and emotional skills through classroom instruction? In some instances, programs have SEL components (e.g., relationship skills or interpersonal problem solving), but define themselves in terms of problems they seek to prevent, such as bullying or substance use. Either way is fine, so long as SEL programming will be comprehensive across the five competencies.

2. Approach program uses for social-emotional development

What approach does the program use to develop social and emotional competence? Some evidence-based programs approach social emotional development through classroom instruction and activities in lessons. Others focus on practical teaching practices that promote social and emotional development and improve relationships, and can be infused throughout the school curriculum. Another possibility is that the program integrates SEL within a core academic subject, such as Language Arts or Social Studies. Some evidence-based programs combine one or more of these approaches. The most important thing to always consider is whether a program covers all five core competencies of SEL.

3. Practice

Effective programs provide opportunities for students to practice new skills and behaviors.

4. Grade levels

CASEL recommends that every student receive high-quality SEL programming across all grades, Pre-K-12. Ask if program materials are sequenced for students at different grade levels, or whether students in different grades use the same materials and participate in the same activities.

5. Evidence of the program’s effectiveness

Always look for evidence of effectiveness in terms of academic and behavioral outcomes. Programs typically include this information on their websites. If a program says that it is evidence-based, ask for documentation. Sometimes a program will say it is evidence-based because the theory behind the program is based in research, yet the program itself may not have actually been evaluated.

6. Costs

The cost of an evidence-based SEL program involves many different factors including materials, professional learning and support for implementation, and support for ongoing evaluation. Cost can also be affected by whether or not multiple schools will be using the program.
Questions to ask program developers include:

- What is the cost of standard program materials? What are recurring costs, each year, if any? What are ways to save on costs?
- What is the cost of professional learning? Are there any ways to save on the professional learning costs?
- Is there professional learning for coaches? Is there a “training of trainers” approach to professional learning that might help control costs? If so, what is the cost and time commitment?
- What are the differences in cost based on the school’s geographic location and/or distance from the program provider or training sessions?

7. Professional learning (PL)

Questions to ask include:

- How much professional learning will staff need? How much time is required? Who should attend the sessions?
- Are there different options for the professional learning for the program? For example, many programs have different learning models that range from one-day workshops to learning events that span several days. Keep in mind that there is strong evidence that one-day workshops do not lead to lasting changes in teaching practice.\(^1\)\(^3\)
- Are there prerequisites for participating in professional learning?
- What opportunities does the professional learning include for participants to practice during the training sessions? Are there opportunities to receive feedback during practice?
- To what extent is the program’s approach compatible with the districts’ professional learning process and schedule?

8. Ongoing support for implementation

Questions to ask include:

- Does the program offer ongoing consultation and support? Please describe these. Are coaches available to facilitate group discussions about the program during team meetings, and/or facilitate teachers coaching one another?
- Does the program offer additional professional learning opportunities such as webinars or other Web-based support?

9. Tools for monitoring implementation

Many programs provide tools for monitoring implementation, either as teacher self-report tools or observational tools coaches or administrators can use during classroom observation.

10. Tools for monitoring student outcomes
Questions to ask include:
- Does the program provide schools with on-site assistance for monitoring the program’s impact? Do they have surveys or others measures that could be used for monitoring student outcomes?
- Does the program provide support for collecting and analyzing student outcomes?
- Does the program provide assistance in interpreting outcome data and making appropriate recommendations?

11. Program materials

Questions to ask include:
- What program materials are available for review? Is there a cost for review materials?
- How long can the school keep review materials before returning them?
- How much of the program and its materials can be viewed directly on the program developer’s website?

12. Cultural relevance

It is helpful for the SEL team to pay careful attention to whether and how programs have made adjustments for different cultural contexts. Questions to determine a program’s cultural and linguistic appropriateness include:
- How does the program ensure that the language, content, and activities will be appropriate for students and parents where the school is located?
- To what extent are the demographics of the student and family population represented in the program’s materials (such as in illustrations or names used in role plays)?
- Has the program been evaluated with populations similar to the one in the school?
- Are there program evaluations that might provide additional information about the cultural and linguistic appropriateness of this program for different groups of students?
- Are there schools currently using the program in communities that are similar in terms of culture and languages? Can the program provider identify individuals in those schools, so that the SEL team could contact them?

13. Guidance for integration and differentiation

Does the program provide guidance on integrating content with other curricula in the school? If so, how clear and user-friendly is this guidance? Can the program provider identify examples? Does the program provide guidelines for integrating with academics, discipline, and student support?

14. Family component

Would the program be likely to help in establishing meaningful partnerships with families? How feasible is the family component?
15. Community component

Are the community activities engaging and well-organized? Would the community component be feasible for the school?

16. Feedback from others who have experience with the program

Questions to ask include:

- Can we contact similar districts or schools that are currently using the program?
- Is there a way to see the program in action?
References
Tool 4.4: Planning for Professional Learning on Evidence-based Programs

Purpose

This tool is designed to help develop the professional learning plan that will support the evidence-based SEL program selected by the SEL team.

How to use this tool

Use this tool to answer important questions, assign tasks, set due dates, and record decisions. An example of how this tool might look when completed is also included.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>STEP/WHO’S RESPONSIBLE</th>
<th>DUE DATE</th>
<th>DECISIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ATTENDANCE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Given the vision and goals for schoolwide SEL, who should participate in the initial professional learning activities for the program?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- All staff members?</td>
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<td>- Administrators?</td>
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<td>- Counselors?</td>
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<td>- Which teachers at which grade levels?</td>
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<td>- Specialists?</td>
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<td>- Nonteaching staff?</td>
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<td>- Parent and community representatives?</td>
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<td>- Central office and district coordinators?</td>
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<td>- Other?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PROGRAM CONTENT AND IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fit with curriculum</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Given current curriculum demands in the school, how well does the program “fit” and how does the program’s professional development address any issues of fit?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- If the program is lesson-based, how many lessons are there?</td>
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<td>- What will “implementing with fidelity” entail?</td>
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<td>- How can the program be</td>
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<td>QUESTIONS</td>
<td>STEP/WHO’S RESPONSIBLE</td>
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<td>integrated with current curriculum?</td>
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</table>

**Instructional strategies**
What instructional strategies (if any) in the current school curriculum are likely to be strengthened by the program? Would additional professional learning around new instructional strategies be needed to ensure staff are prepared to implement effectively?

**Schoolwide practices**
What current schoolwide practices (if any) are likely to be strengthened by the program? Given the vision and goals for schoolwide SEL, are these sufficient or would additional professional learning for schoolwide practices be needed?

**PROFESSIONAL LEARNING LOGISTICS ISSUES**

**Delivery Options**
What options exist for how professional learning is facilitated?
- Face-to-face workshops
- Written and self-directed?
- Online?
- Video conferencing?

Is coaching available?

Does professional learning need to be facilitated by the program developer or another professional learning provider in order for staff to receive certification?

Where will initial professional learning take place?
- In the district?
- At a predetermined regional location?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>STEP/WHO’S RESPONSIBLE</th>
<th>DUE DATE</th>
<th>DECISIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the time commitment needed for initial professional learning?</td>
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<td>• A few hours?</td>
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<td>• Days?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Are there follow-up sessions during the year?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Timing</strong></td>
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<td>What time of the year will be best for professional learning based on the following considerations:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Implementation launch date</td>
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<tr>
<td>• School and district professional learning calendar</td>
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<td>• School and district assessment calendar</td>
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<td>• Allotted staff learning days in the district</td>
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<td>• Substitute teacher availability</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Maximizing participation</td>
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<td>• Participants’ needs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Costs</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the cost of:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Initial professional learning?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Would teachers need to be paid stipends for release time? How much would this cost?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How much would it cost for additional professional learning events, coaching, mentoring, and/or consulting?</td>
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<td>• Is there a “training-of-trainers” option? How much does this cost?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Is sufficient funding available for professional learning? Should the school apply for grants? Does the program provide resources to support grant writing?</td>
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<tr>
<td>QUESTIONS</td>
<td>STEP/WHO'S RESPONSIBLE</td>
<td>DUE DATE</td>
<td>DECISIONS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional learning credits What state, and/or district certification issues must be coordinated with the program’s professional learning?</td>
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</table>
## ATTENDANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>STEP/WHO'S RESPONSIBLE</th>
<th>DUE DATE</th>
<th>DECISIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Given the vision, goals and objectives of our SEL initiative, who should participate in the initial professional learning activities?  
  - All staff members?  
  - Administrators?  
  - Counselors?  
  - Which teachers at which grade levels?  
  - Specialists?  
  - Nonteaching staff?  
  - Parent and community representatives?  
  - Central office and district coordinators?  
  - Other? | SEL team will meet to discuss who should attend the initial professional learning | SEL team meeting: March 15 | All staff will attend the initial professional learning, including nonteaching staff members.  
  Three parent leaders will attend.  
  Three community representatives will attend. |

## PROGRAM CONTENT AND IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

### Fit with curriculum

Given current curriculum demands, what issues about how the program “fits” with current curriculum can be addressed through professional learning?  
  - If the program is lesson-based, how many lessons are there?  
  - What does implementing the program with fidelity entail?  
  - How can the program be integrated with current curriculum?  
  - What should the curriculum design for the year look like?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>STEP/WHO'S RESPONSIBLE</th>
<th>DUE DATE</th>
<th>DECISIONS</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| SEL team will meet with grade level leaders and discuss curriculum fit issues.  
  Principal will call the program developers or professional learning providers to discuss these issues. | SEL team meeting: March 15  
  SEL team and grade-level leaders: March 25 | SEL team & grade-level leaders: March 26 | The program has 24 lessons per grade level that are designed to be taught once per week. Our crowded curriculum does not permit that much time for a separate class, so principal or SEL leader talked with the program developer about integration options.  
  The program developer suggested integrating the lessons into language arts and will prepare a literacy-based curriculum map for the initial professional learning. |

### Instructional strategies

What instructional strategies does the program help strengthen? Are these sufficient or would additional professional learning around instructional strategies need to be facilitated to ensure staff is prepared to implement effectively?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>STEP/WHO'S RESPONSIBLE</th>
<th>DUE DATE</th>
<th>DECISIONS</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| SEL team will meet with grade level leaders and parent/community reps to hear what content they think will best address needs assessment | SEL team meeting: March 15  
  SEL team & grade-level leaders: March 25 | | Teachers, parents, and community members want a strong emphasis on respectful behaviors and anti-bullying behaviors.  
  The program developer said the facilitator would put a strong emphasis on daily respectful behaviors and anti-bullying |

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTENDANCE</th>
<th>PROGRAM CONTENT AND IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| SEL team will meet to discuss who should attend the initial professional learning | SEL team meeting: March 15  
  SEL team and grade-level leaders: March 25 | SEL team & grade-level leaders: March 26 |  
  The program has 24 lessons per grade level that are designed to be taught once per week. Our crowded curriculum does not permit that much time for a separate class, so principal or SEL leader talked with the program developer about integration options.  
  The program developer suggested integrating the lessons into language arts and will prepare a literacy-based curriculum map for the initial professional learning. |
### Schoolwide practices

What schoolwide practices does the program help strengthen? Given the vision and goals for schoolwide SEL, are these sufficient or would additional professional learning for schoolwide practices be needed?

**SEL team will meet to discuss schoolwide themes and opportunities to integrate SEL into existing schoolwide activities.**

**Principal will discuss these with program developer.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEL team meeting: March 15</th>
<th>Principal call to developer: March 26</th>
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</table>

### Monthly themes that match the units of the SEL program:

- Becoming a School Community
- Showing Respect for Self & Others
- School Pride and Respecting School Property
- Taking Responsibility for One’s Self
- Making Positive Decisions
- Resolving Conflicts Constructively
- Choosing a Healthy Lifestyle
- Saying No to Drugs
- Celebrating Diversity

Program developer said facilitator will approach the professional learning event from the perspective of the monthly themes.

---

### PROFESSIONAL LEARNING LOGISTICS ISSUES

#### Delivery Options

What options exist for how professional learning is facilitated?
- Face-to-face workshops
- Written and self-directed?
- Online?
- Video conferencing?

Is coaching available?

Does professional learning need to be facilitated by the program developer or another professional learning provider for staff to receive certification?

Where does the initial professional learning take place?
- In the district?

**Principal will look at staff development calendar and logistical issues for the school year to determine best plan.**

**Principal will call the program developer to discuss delivery options.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal call to developer: March 26</th>
<th>The program developer and principal made the following decisions:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal call to developer: March 26</td>
<td>- The initial professional learning will be a face-to-face, interactive, experiential learning for all implementers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal call to developer: March 26</td>
<td>- The curriculum and associated materials are given only to those who are certified in the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal call to developer: March 26</td>
<td>- The event will take place on-site at the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal call to developer: March 26</td>
<td>- It is a 13-hour event. There is no flexibility on this requirement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- At a predetermined regional location?

What is the time commitment needed for the initial professional learning?
- A few hours?
- Days?
- Are there follow-up sessions during the year?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>SEL team will meet to discuss best timing</th>
<th>SEL team meeting: March 15</th>
<th>The professional learning event will be offered during the summer in two consecutive days so staff is prepared to implement in the fall at the beginning of the school year.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What time of the year will be best for professional learning based on:</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Implementation launch date</td>
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<td>- Maximizing participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Participants’ needs</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costs</th>
<th>Principal will confirm cost with program developer and look for budgets out of which to pay for professional learning.</th>
<th>Principal call to developer: March 26</th>
<th>Professional learning costs: $10,000 for a schoolwide event of up to 40 participants. Includes two days of professional learning, teacher materials, and student materials for first year of implementation.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the cost of the initial professional learning?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Would teachers need to be paid stipends for release time? How much would this cost?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How much would it cost for additional professional learning events, coaching, mentoring, and/or consulting? Is there a “training-of-trainers” option? How much does this cost?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is sufficient funding available for professional learning? Should the school apply for grants? Does the program provide resources to support grant writing?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Principal will pay for professional learning out of the Character Education grant.

All initial two-day learning event is $10,000 for new implementers.

Additional one-day workshops are $3,000. Consultation is $1,000 per day.

Training of Trainers is $10,000 to certify two candidates. District is not choosing this option at this time.
| Professional learning credits What state, and/or district certification issues must be coordinated with the program’s professional learning? | Principal will get agenda and program syllabus from program developer and compare it to the requirements for continuing education credits. She will discuss the requirements with the program developer. | Principal call to developers: March 26 | The initial program-related professional learning meets requirements for two continuing education credits. |
Chapter 5 Tools

Tool 5.1: Integrating Common Core State Standards and Social and Emotional Learning Standards Template ................................................................. 2

Tool 5.2: Leading, Developing, and Sustaining an SEL School Climate ................................................................. 5

Tool 5.3: Partnering with Families ......................................................................................................................... 10

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Tool 5.1: Integrating Common Core State Standards and Social and Emotional Learning Standards Template

Purpose

This tool can be used to develop learning activities that promote integration of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and SEL standards.

How to use this tool

The tool contains two examples and a blank template. The first example relates to CCSS for reading. It was developed by the DuPage County Regional Office of Education. The second example relates to CCSS for math. After SEL teams review these examples, they can use the blank template on their own to develop learning activities that align with both CCSS and SEL. Since this template was developed in Chicago, the example below refers to the Illinois State Board of Education SEL standards for grades K-12.

Example 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Core Standards (6-8) Academic target: Students will be able to...</th>
<th>SEL Illinois Goals and Learning Standards/SEL Competencies. Students will be able to...</th>
<th>What would teachers need to do to integrate SEL and CCSS?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCSS: Reading Literature Standard 2 (6-8) – Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationships to characters, setting, and plot and provide an objective summary.</td>
<td>Goal(s): Learning Standard(s): SEL Competency(s):</td>
<td>Purpose: Learning Activity(s):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCSS: Reading Literature Standard 6 (7) - Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.</td>
<td>Goal(s): 32: Use social awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships. 33: Demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts. Learning Standards: 33B: Apply decision making skills to deal responsibly with daily academic and social situations. SEL Competencies: Social Awareness: The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others.</td>
<td>Purpose: Students will understand how these feelings and perspectives are important to the development of the text. Learning activity(s): Teach a lesson on perspective taking. Ask questions that cause students to think deeply about the characters' feelings and perspectives and cite evidence from the text. Pick a popular song that illustrates a character's point of view and be able to explain why this song was chosen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Example 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CCSS: Mathematics Core Idea 3: Algebra and Functions (Grade 8). Understand relations and functions, analyze mathematical situations, and use model to solve problem involving quantity and change.</th>
<th>Goals: Goal 33: Demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts. Learning Standards: 33B: Apply decision-making skills to deal responsibly with daily academic and social situations. SEL Competencies: Responsible Decision-Making: The ability to make decisions based on accurate consideration of all relevant factors and the likely consequences of alternative courses of action.</th>
<th>Purpose: Model and solve contextualized problems involving inequalities, using problem-solving strategies and mathematical language to make complex situations easier to understand. Learning activity; Anna goes to pick apples. She see two orchards next to each other. David’s orchard and Pam’s orchard. Each has a sign with information. Anna wants to pick 40 pounds of apples. How much does this cost at David’s orchard? Pam’s orchard? Show calculations. David’s: First 10 lbs. - $2 per pound. Each additional lb. - $1 per lb. Pam’s: $10 entry fee First 10 lbs. $1.50 per pound Each additional lb. - $.75 Students reflect on their ability to focus, deal with their feelings, and motivate themselves to persevere.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCSS: Mathematics Core Idea 2: Mathematical Reasoning (Grade 8). Employ forms of mathematical reasoning and justification appropriately to the solution of a problem.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Common Core State Standards and Social Emotional Learning Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Core Standards Academic Target: Students will be able to...</th>
<th>SEL Goals and Learning Standards/SEL competencies Students will be able to...</th>
<th>What would teachers need to do to integrate SEL and CCSS?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCSS:</td>
<td>Goal(s)</td>
<td>Purpose:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning Standard(s):</td>
<td>Learning Activity(s):</td>
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<td></td>
<td>SEL Competency(s):</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCSS:</td>
<td>Goal(s)</td>
<td>Purpose:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Learning Standard(s):</td>
<td>Learning Activity(s):</td>
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<td></td>
<td>SEL Competency(s):</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCSS:</td>
<td>Goal(s)</td>
<td>Purpose:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Learning Standard(s):</td>
<td>Learning Activity(s):</td>
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<td></td>
<td>SEL Competency(s):</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCSS:</td>
<td>Goal(s)</td>
<td>Purpose:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Learning Standard(s):</td>
<td>Learning Activity(s):</td>
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<td></td>
<td>SEL Competency(s):</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCSS:</td>
<td>Goal(s)</td>
<td>Purpose:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Learning Standard(s):</td>
<td>Learning Activity(s):</td>
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<td></td>
<td>SEL Competency(s):</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Tool 5.2: Leading, Developing, and Sustaining an SEL School Climate

Purpose

This tool contains a variety of ways the SEL team can enhance their approach to promoting a positive and supportive school climate.

How to use this tool

The tool consists of two charts with different types of activities. The first includes practical activities staff can use immediately to promote a positive SEL climate and model SEL competencies.

The second list can be used to create an ongoing process for focusing, reflecting on, and sustaining a positive learning climate. After moving through some of the activities in the first list and then beginning to incorporate ideas from the second list, the SEL team will be able to determine the most appropriate activities to implement systematically.

Both charts include ratings to indicate how often these activities are currently being implemented in the school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities to develop a positive SEL school climate and model SEL</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create a welcoming environment for students and parents. Encourage all staff to greet children and families by name in the morning. This simple demonstration of caring helps to reassure families and can create a sense that the school is caring, supportive, and welcoming.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Make an effort at the beginning of the year to learn students’ names. To help learn their names, consider taking home student photos to study, attend school games, be present in the cafeteria during lunch, or even have the entire school community wear name tags for the first few weeks of school—whatever it takes to learn the names of every person in the school and create an environment where students and staff alike feel that they belong.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attend and participate in all workshops and presentations offered at the school that are related to SEL. Share what staff and community members are learning to engage others in thinking about how to implement SEL schoolwide.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activities to develop a positive SEL school climate and model SEL</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Make SEL a regular part of morning announcements.</strong>&lt;br&gt;For example:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Create an SEL theme of the month.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Have students read quotations or poems that address important SEL themes or skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Remind students to complement each other or be friendly to someone new.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Focus on a specific strategy to promote schoolwide SEL each day and encourage all school community members to use it throughout the day.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Make SEL a regular part of every staff meeting.</strong>&lt;br&gt;For example:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Organize a community-building activity at the beginning of the meeting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Collaborate with staff to establish norms or shared agreements for how the staff wants to interact and work together.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Allow time at each meeting to share ideas, strategies, and successes related to SEL during the past month.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Allow time for status reports on the school’s SEL work as a standing agenda item in every staff meeting—a strong signal to staff that SEL is important.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Recognize and celebrate the contributions of the entire school community regularly.</strong>&lt;br&gt;For example:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Make recognition of students and school events a part of morning announcements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Visit classrooms to thank the teachers and students for their work on a successful project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Congratulate an entire grade level for their good behavior during a recent field trip.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Stop by music or art classes to express appreciation for a recent performance or exhibit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Have classes design a congratulations or encouragement poster for school teams such as sports, debate, and clubs.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Create a confidential memo box for students to communicate problems or concerns they have about the school and respond to them on a regular basis.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Use strategies that provide opportunities for students to learn and practice SEL skills whenever students are referred to the office for a behavioral issue.</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Activities to sustain a positive learning climate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities for students</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop an active, visible, meaningful student government that is not just a popularity contest. Use it to involve students in issues outside the school at the local, regional, and national level. Consider involving the student government in decision-making about schoolwide SEL.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Before school begins each year, assign new students a “buddy” who initiates contact before school starts and provides ongoing support. This strategy can work particularly well at the high school level to help new students feel welcome and comfortable. At the elementary level, ask parents to volunteer to be buddies to new families.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Start a “recess roundtable” for students. Invite five or six students from a grade at a time to join for a 20-minute roundtable discussion during recess. Ask students to sign their names in a guest book and invite them to ask questions about the school or to voice concerns and make suggestions for improvement. This creates a climate of caring and trust that tells students their opinion matters.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage students to participate in a nonacademic school activity or club that takes place before or after school to encourage them to build SEL skills and interact with other children. If the adopted SEL evidence-based program involves explicit skills instruction through lessons, use teacher release time to observe how other teachers facilitate them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Each year ask graduating students (whether high school seniors, eighth-graders about to attend high school for the first time, or fifth-graders moving on to middle school) to write about their positive experiences at the school. Gather these writings together in a book that can be shared with new students and their families the following year. This can create a sense of community and good will in the school and help graduating students feel special about their place in the school’s history.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hold a weekly lunch for the students from each classroom who have demonstrated particularly strong SEL skills (e.g., as part of a specific SEL lesson or through solving a difficult problem). Ask teachers and/or students for nominations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activities to sustain a positive learning climate</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Often</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Activities for students</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Have students lead conferences focused on topics such as assessing one’s own strengths and weaknesses, setting goals, improving the quality of one’s work, and making plans for self-improvement. In addition to teaching students to take responsibility for their academic work, this can help to engage parents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>For elementary schools, ease the transition to middle school by providing information and lessons on what to expect there.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Create a “middle school handbook” to send to parents at the end of elementary school with information about all the positive aspects of middle school, including opportunities for students to learn more personal responsibility and become involved in new activities and relationships.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide a forum for teaching middle school “survival skills.” These include learning how to arrange lockers and notebooks, keep track of assignments, organize to get work done, study for tests, respond to teasing or pressure from older students, talk to teachers as adults, carry out library research, and develop the social-emotional skills needed for effective group and everyday interactions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Have a transition day when students who are moving to a new level visit their new school, meet the teachers, and interact with older students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>After implementing schoolwide SEL for a number of years and developing a high level of trust and community, consider having students evaluate teachers. This practice can be used for teacher self-improvement. These evaluations can be starting points for class discussion and student engagement. If there is already a reliable climate survey in the school, this activity may not be needed.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Activities to sustain a positive learning climate</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Activities for Staff, Parent, and Community Members</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage the athletic director to institute “Character Awards.” At the end of every sports competition the athletes from the school’s team vote for the two people from the opposing team who showed the greatest character (e.g., took a bad call without an argument or helped a teammate). Give the two students medals to take home. This practice acknowledges competition but focuses on teamwork and sportsmanship rather than who won or lost.</td>
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</table>
### Activities to sustain a positive learning climate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Include information about the SEL initiative in the school handbook for parents and community members. At the beginning of the year highlight specific sections for parents to read.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Host early morning coffees or monthly brown-bag or pizza lunches for teachers and parents to encourage conversation and build community and trust. At the start of the year invite members of the school community to submit discussion topics. Choose and advertise a monthly topic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage teachers to share ideas that create opportunities for inspiration, joint problem-solving, and acknowledgment of successful strategies. These kinds of activities help teachers feel less isolated and encourage the use of new SEL skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offer professional learning opportunities for teachers to learn some of the skills they will need in order to teach students SEL skills, including communication skills, assertiveness training, active listening, anger management, and role-playing techniques.</td>
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</table>
Tool 5.3: Partnering with Families

Purpose

This tool was designed to help identify ways to build relationships with families to ensure integration of SEL at school, in each student’s home, and in the community.

How to use this tool

Based on both research and practice, this tool allows SEL teams to list practices the school already uses to engage and partner with families, including any that are part of the school’s evidence-based SEL program(s). The tool also encourages the SEL team to identify ways in which they can further engage families in learning about, supporting, and promoting SEL in the home, school, and community.

Partnering with families

In order to advance academic, social, and emotional learning, schools need to take account of how they engage with families and interact with them in positive ways. You may want to revisit Tool 2.1: School Strengths Inventory in Chapter 2 to review what types of family partnerships are already in place. School-family partnerships create consistency and continuity in expectations for student behavior between home and school, and evidence-based SEL programs can become more powerful when they extend into the home.

Successful school-family partnerships are based on the idea that all families can contribute to student learning and development and that families and teachers share responsibility for nurturing and educating students. They are built on trusting relationships between families and schools that recognize and respect each other’s diverse styles, skills, and strengths.

Developing this kind of trust requires time and sensitivity on the part of educators to address families’ needs. This is because many families face time pressures due to work and long commute times, especially when families are headed by a single caregiver. The high cost of living may mean that caregivers have to work long hours causing real limitations on their availability for school meetings and events. Families with lower incomes may feel awkward at school events that involve the payment of money such as bake sales and fund-raisers. Some families may feel awkward because of friction they or their child has experienced with school staff. Fostering the active engagement of families in SEL will require offering many options for participation to address a range of needs and contexts.

A good starting point for partnering with families is to recognize their existing involvement and their positive contributions. The next section can help schools assess how they currently engage and partner with families and help identify additional strategies.
## Strategies for Establishing School-Family Partnerships in Support of SEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Take stock in ways the school currently engages and partners with families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the school’s philosophy and policy regarding partnering with families?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| What are ways the school currently engages and/or partners with families to support SEL? |

| What strategies for partnering with families does the evidence-based SEL program include? |

| What types of SEL learning opportunities are offered to staff and parents/families related to partnering with families? |
Consider a variety of outreach strategies to encourage and engage families to participate in school family partnerships for SEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use two-way communication with families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Orient families to a role in which they provide feedback and input about schoolwide SEL. Two-way communication can maximize teamwork and minimize misunderstandings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Set the tone by communicating with families at the beginning of the school year. Start off by gathering information about family preferences, talents, and availability to work with students on academic and SEL learning activities. Engage families by distributing welcoming letters and learning more about them by asking them to complete brief surveys about family preferences for school-home communications and involvement and their perceptions of SEL. Ask families to complete “talent cards” or student information sheets to get family perceptions of their students’ strengths.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Inform families about available school programs, activities, and policies that support SEL. Sharing SEL policies and practices helps families understand how the school operates and encourages them to partner with the school in supporting student performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Communicate with families about SEL activities in the school using regularly scheduled means of formal and informal communication. For example, class newsletters can be sent home on a regular basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Use “notes-back-and-forth” where school staff can highlight successes students are experiencing and SEL skills they are demonstrating. Families can provide input and send the notes back about SEL, knowledge, skills, and dispositions their children are demonstrating at home. This avoids communicating with families only when students are experiencing challenges and difficulties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Be flexible and creative with communication about SEL. Find what works for different families. Some families may respond best to written or electronic communications while others may respond best to in-person communication. Even if families do have access to email, it should be used prudently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Post important SEL information on the school’s website so families can access it at their own convenience. Such information might be related to SEL curriculum, homework assignments, climate and culture, and upcoming events.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engage families</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Invite families to get involved in SEL by offering volunteer opportunities (e.g., in classes, outside of classes, extracurricular activities, or field trips).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ For all types of face-to-face meetings, have a translator available so you can meet the needs of all families who are part of your school community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Encourage family events like family nights or a “caregiver/parent of the week” program in which family members can share their occupations, interests, hobbies, culture and/or stories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Organize lunches where parents can spend time with school staff and/or students. Also consider evening meals or dinners before major school events like musicals, plays, or sporting events for family members who are not available during the work day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Give families access to athletic facilities like basketball courts and weight rooms or offer exercise classes or other facilities like computer labs where families can experience the school as a center of community activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Increase family involvement in academic, social, and emotional learning | • Provide supportive assistance to families to support their children’s learning at home. This might include ideas for establishing a home environment that extends and reinforces the SEL skills and disposition their students are learning in school.  
• Provide families with information on children’s social and emotional development for the age range in your school and how they can support this development at home.  
• Provide families with information on homework policies and how to support student homework.  
• Assign SEL activities and homework that involve families. |
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involves families in decision-making</td>
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</table>
| ▪ Organize parent-teacher conferences and meetings that encourage families to be involved in decisions affecting their children’s learning.  
| ▪ Enable families to participate as members of decision-making committees and groups. Examples include family member participation on the SEL team, school improvement team, or district committees. |
| Bridge constraints | ▪ Meet with families outside of the school or during evenings or weekends to meet the needs of those with schedules that limit their participation at other times.  
▪ Provide interpreters for families to overcome language barriers. If resources allow, hire a family liaison to help address language and cultural barriers. This person could also help develop newsletters, assist in conferences and meetings, and plan family outreach events. |
| Establish a “Family Center” | ▪ Assign a designated room or space for families (and community members). It can serve as a place for information sharing, workshops, or other activities related to SEL and family engagement. One or more staff members might be assigned to this special place to facilitate and encourage family involvement. |
| Provide programming for parents/families | ▪ Host informational question-and-answer sessions for families so they can better understand the school’s SEL program and any other school activities about which they may have questions.  
▪ Organize workshops and other activities aimed at helping families meet students’ developmental needs in appropriate ways. Workshops for families with younger children can focus on school readiness, mastery of basic skills, and motivation. For families with older children the content can focus on such topics as facilitating transitions to the upper grades, understanding their children’s growing desire for autonomy, or addressing risky health behaviors. At the high school level, family-oriented programming can turn to such issues as the complexities of the high school curriculum, graduation criteria, and career planning.  
▪ Offer programming for parents that might focus on SEL skill-building, such as courses for English language learners, family members working on their GED, and computer skills.  
▪ Provide informational sessions about school SEL practices and policies, various tests and SEL standards students are expected to meet, and learning goals for literacy, mathematics, and SEL. These sessions could discuss ways families can support their students’ success in these areas. |
| Increase capacity of school staff to partner with families | ▪ Include professional learning opportunities related to partnering with families and encouraging family involvement in the school.  
▪ Focus professional learning on how to cultivate productive relationships with families, personalize connections and interactions with families, and collaborate and leverage cultural richness and diversity for effective engagement strategies |
### Identifying enhancements to current family partnership strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How can we enhance current strategies for partnering with families?</th>
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</table>
References


Tool 5.4: Partnering with the Broader Community

Purpose

The purpose of this tool is to help identify ways to build partnerships with the broader community.

How to use this tool

This tool provides space to list strategies the school already uses to engage and partner with the community. It also includes suggestions for how to strengthen these partnerships. After reviewing the list of strategies and taking stock of what the school is already doing, the SEL team can identify ways to enhance school-community partnerships.

Partnering with Community Organizations to Support SEL

In addition to involving families, a comprehensive approach draws upon the strengths and resources of community-based organizations, health care providers, governmental agencies, and other institutions.\(^1\) Such an approach helps to cultivate student SEL in the context of safe and nurturing environments throughout the community.
In what ways does the school currently engage and partner with the broader community?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the school’s philosophy and policy regarding partnering with the broader community?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are ways the school currently engages and/or partners with the broader community?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What strategies for partnering with the community does the school’s evidence-based SEL program(s) include?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What types of professional learning are offered to staff that facilitate partnering with the broader community?</td>
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</table>
Specific ideas for encouraging broader community engagement and school-community partnerships

| Engage community organizations and supports | Identify and reach out to organizations and advocacy groups that specialize in services and supports aligned with SEL, positive youth development, and/or student’s academic achievement and school success.  
• Collaborate with community organizations willing to share useful data or provide specialized skills that may not be available in the school.  
• Ask community groups to help teachers and other school staff learn about the local community and likely partners for an SEL initiative. |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Link families with community resources and supports | Identify community organizations, programs, or activities that support health, recreation, social support, and cultural sensitivity. These may include organizations that focus on youth development, college preparation, mentoring, tutoring, mental health and counseling, food banks, clothing, and related matters. Keep an inventory of those that are available in the community and help families access them when needed.  
• Utilize support from the district if there is an office related to family involvement in the context of community organizations and services. This office may also be able to facilitate professional learning for school staff members focused on linking families with community resources. |
| Enrich community-based experiences for students | Connect with local organizations to identify service-learning activities for students.  
• Reach out to organizations or businesses to determine if there are opportunities for student apprenticeships, jobs, or summer internships.  
• Partner with local organizations or businesses to identify opportunities for students to learn about how they operate, what it takes to be a leader in such an environment, and what the business or organization does to help support their community. |
| Establish a positive presence in the community | Work with local organizations to identify community service projects where students can make connections with peers, families, and adults.  
• Organize ways to demonstrate the school’s commitment to its surrounding community. For example, organize a clean-up event for the school yard and surrounding area through an “adopt a block” program or participate in visible efforts like Habitat for Humanity. |

Identify enhancements to current community partnership strategies

Are there any ways the school would like to enhance current strategies for partnering with the broader community?
Chapter 6 Tools

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Tool 6.1: Learning from Process Monitoring Data

Purpose

The purpose of this tool is to help the SEL team reflect on data related to the schoolwide implementation process so they can highlight progress and consider any needed midcourse adjustments.

How to use this tool

This tool describes a basic approach that can be used to learn from process monitoring data. This tool can be used flexibly since different schools will have access to different types of process-related data.

Approach to learning from process monitoring data

Without process monitoring it is difficult to know how well a schoolwide SEL effort is progressing. The basic approach to monitoring schoolwide SEL implementation described in this tool includes:

- Organizing available process monitoring data
- Reflecting on and interpreting the data
- Providing feedback to school staff
- Deciding on next steps to improve implementation

Organizing available process monitoring data

The first thing the SEL team will need to do is assemble any data that relates to the implementation process. This could be in the form of planning documents, goals that have been set, or any information from teachers and other school staff who have been implementing schoolwide SEL.

Written implementation plan. Most implementation plans include tasks that are linked to expected completion dates. Tool 1.2: Developing a Schoolwide Implementation Plan is structured this way. Implementation plans can be used to monitor the implementation process by reviewing when tasks are scheduled for completion and when and how well they are completed.

Tasks completed as planned and on time are indicators that things are on track. When tasks aren’t completed as intended this offers the SEL team an opportunity to delve more deeply into the schoolwide implementation process by asking what happened or didn’t happen and why. Tasks that have not been completed could indicate that school staff have encountered unforeseen obstacles. For example, the monitoring process may reveal that teachers are finding they need more time to fully complete certain tasks with quality. Perhaps there is a need for more professional learning.

Implementation data related to SEL programming. Many different aspects of SEL implementation may be monitored. At the very least, this should include the specific activities taking place and their frequency. Just because an SEL program or approach is being used, however, does not mean it is being used in a high-quality way. As noted in Chapter 4, fidelity to the model maximizes the
likelihood of the same level of effectiveness as was achieved when the program was tested in a rigorous evaluation.

**Information from teachers and other school staff members.** School staff members who are leading schoolwide SEL and involved with SEL on a daily basis are an invaluable source of information for process monitoring. Their input can be solicited in staff meetings, grade-level team meetings, or subject area meetings. Effective approaches for data gathering include open-ended conversations or brief surveys.

**Reflecting on and interpreting the data**

To be useful and easy to interpret, data gathered through process monitoring can be summarized in charts, graphs, or short reports. Once the data is summarized, the SEL team can develop topics and questions for reflection to identify what is going well with schoolwide SEL and any difficulties or issues revealed by the data.

The SEL team may reflect on the data on their own or they may want to involve others in the school community to include a broader range of perspectives. To involve a group larger than just the SEL team we recommend using **Tool 6.3: Learning from data as a team.**

The following reflection questions are suggested to review progress on the school’s SEL implementation plan, determine the extent to which the school is achieving its goals for SEL, and checking in with the school community on the implementation process.

**Review of progress on the implementation plan**
- How is our progress on tasks and timelines on the plan?
- Where are we meeting the benchmarks we set? What are reasons for this?
- Where are we not meeting our benchmarks? What are reasons for this?
- Are we offering the programming that was planned?

**Review of progress towards documented goals**
- How is our progress on documented goals?
- Where are we meeting our goals? What are reasons for this?
- Where are we not meeting our goals? What might be reasons for this?

**Checking in with school community on the implementation process**
- How do different stakeholders feel about schoolwide SEL so far?
- Are individuals implementing evidence-based programs delivering an adequate amount of the program at a high-quality level?
- Are staff encountering any implementation challenges that need to be addressed?
- What supports are needed to ensure high-quality implementation?
- Are students engaged in the programming in the way we hoped for?
- What factors have helped us be effective?
- What challenges are we facing?
- What infrastructure changes have helped the process? Made it more difficult?
**What does the data mean?**

- What patterns exist in the data?
- Does anything suggest that additional professional learning and support are needed?
- What factors have helped schoolwide SEL be effective?
- What challenges do we face?
- What gets in the way of implementing the program as it was designed and intended?
- Can schoolwide SEL be sustained through current efforts?
- What important lessons are being learned?

**Providing feedback to school staff**

Determining how the results of process monitoring will be shared with the school community is a critically important step. This feedback is best offered in a spirit of providing opportunities for further learning and school improvement.

The best ways to present the results of process monitoring will depend on which aspects of the data the SEL team wants to emphasize. For example, if they want to highlight improvements to infrastructure that supports SEL, they could structure feedback around the six key activities of schoolwide SEL as described in [Schoolwide Implementation Rubric](#). Or they could highlight progress toward goals and benchmarks on the implementation plan. Feedback can also be used to promote high-fidelity implementation of an evidence-based SEL program, engage stakeholders in the implementation process to increase their ownership and buy-in, and prevent future implementation problems.

**Deciding on next steps to improve implementation**

Based on what you find, consider these questions:

- What should we start doing?
- What should we continue doing?
- What should we modify?
- What should we stop doing?
- What are ways to simplify our plans, goals, and processes for more effective SEL implementation?
References
Tool 6.2: Learning from Outcome Monitoring Data

Purpose

The purpose of this tool is to help the SEL team reflect on outcome data to determine whether schoolwide SEL is achieving its intended effects.

How to use this tool

This tool describes a basic approach for using and interpreting outcome data, given that schools will have access to different types of data and resources.

Approach to learning from outcome data

Outcome monitoring is the process of systematically gathering information to determine the extent to which planned outcomes are being achieved. This involves gathering the right information and asking important questions. A year or two of schoolwide SEL may be needed before changes in outcomes can be observed. Nevertheless, regular monitoring of outcomes can help to guide improvements to schoolwide SEL as implementation progresses.

To make the most of this process several elements of effective outcome monitoring need to be in place. They include sustained staff participation, ongoing monitoring related to identified goals and priorities, and a consistent method that includes an examination of data at every level — student, teacher, administrator, and system.\(^3\)\(^4\)

The basic approach to monitoring schoolwide SEL outcomes described in this tool includes:

- Organizing available outcome data
- Reflecting on and interpreting the data
- Sharing results with the school community
- Revisiting the cycle of inquiry and making adaptations

Organizing available outcome data

Several types of outcome data may be available to the SEL team. This would include information about student achievement and behavior as well as the school community’s perceptions of school climate.

Often this data is quantitative, meaning that it is expressed through numbers. Quantitative data typically comes from survey results or administrative data collection procedures. To interpret such data the SEL team will need to rely on staff members who are skilled at creating charts and graphs and conducting basic statistical analyses. Staff with technical writing skills may be needed to help develop a summary or a report of this information.

The SEL team may also have information that is qualitative in nature — meaning it is information that is not numerical. These types of data sources may be interview or focus group responses or narratives of significant events that have occurred in the school. Although this type of information can provide
insights into staff members’ and students’ daily experiences in the school, qualitative data is more time-consuming to summarize.

The literature on using data for decision-making in schools often highlights the importance of multiple sources of information. However, using too many data sources can be overwhelming. The SEL team can simplify the process by being deliberate about the sources they choose and selecting only those that relate most directly to the desired outcomes for schoolwide SEL.

The following list provides resources to consider that can help with monitoring schoolwide SEL outcomes.

**Goals for schoolwide SEL.** Since goals typically tie directly to desired outcomes, they are an obvious source to include when reflecting on outcome data.

SEL teams that used Tool 2.3: Developing Goals for Schoolwide SEL to develop SMART goals will be in a good position when monitoring outcomes. The SMART approach ensures that the team has thought about how the goals will be measured and that a timeframe has been set for achieving them.

**Data related to infrastructure changes that support SEL.** Any information related changes in the way the school has adjusted practices, processes, and activities to support SEL can be useful when monitoring outcomes.

Benchmarks related to how far along a school is on its way to supporting schoolwide SEL may be outcomes in their own right or may help explain how other outcomes are being met. For example, one school may select staff participation in professional learning events as a benchmark toward encouraging staff to enhance their ability to model social and emotional competencies. Another school may consider staff participation in professional learning as a benchmark toward increased staff use of instructional practices that promote SEL.

Teams that used the Schoolwide Implementation Rubric will have data on benchmarks for schoolwide SEL that are aligned with the six key activities of the School Theory of Action. If the team completed the rubric at the beginning of the year, and then again toward the end, they can discuss whether SEL programming may be the catalyst for any changes. In this way, the rubric can be used to highlight the year’s accomplishments and inform priorities for the next school year.

**Student behavior data.** Data related to student behavior are most useful for looking at outcomes when they are collected at multiple points during a year since that can help the SEL team assess change over time. Even if data are collected only once at the end of the year they can still be useful. Different types of student data include:

**Student social and emotional competencies.** For schoolwide SEL, some of the most relevant indicators are measures of student social emotional competencies. Schools may measure these competencies directly, or items related to these competencies could be embedded in a larger survey that measures school climate or risky behaviors like substance abuse or engaging in violence.
Attendance, discipline and health referrals, and other student-related administrative data. Other indicators about student behavior include attendance rates, frequency and nature of discipline referrals, and frequency of health referrals. The SEL team can also work with student support services staff to track student progress related to different tiers of supports.

School climate data. School climate instruments measure various aspects of a school’s academic and social environment, and many relate to SEL. Similar to student behavioral data, collecting data at multiple points over time can be helpful in developing an understanding of key issues related to school climate and improvement.

Achievement data. Student grades, standardized test scores, and the percentage of students progressing to the next grade level are one set of student achievement indicators. Classroom teachers and grade-level and course-level teams maybe be able to contribute student assessment data that could be also be helpful. Together these indicators can be used to discuss student academic growth and whether and how schoolwide SEL is contributing.

Re-administered measures that were used during the SEL resources and needs assessment. SEL teams that conducted an SEL resources and needs assessment can re-administer the measures they used during the initial assessment process. If the team used Tool 2.1: School Strengths Inventory, they will have information related to SEL curriculum and instruction in the school, schoolwide practices that support SEL, and ways the school partners with families and community agencies.

Reflecting on and interpreting the data

After the data have been organized and summarized time should be allowed for making team-based decisions and reaching consensus about what the data indicate. The team can then collectively decide how they will apply what they learned to improving the school’s approach to schoolwide SEL. This addresses the cycle of inquiry question “How will we improve practice with what we have learned?”

The SEL team may choose to do this on their own, or they may want to involve additional school community members to include a broader range of perspectives. Tool 6.3: Learning from data as a team can be used to guide larger groups through this process.

Reflection questions

To what extent have outcomes been achieved?

• Which of the expected outcomes are being achieved? Which do we still need to accomplish?
• What evidence is there that students are benefitting?
• Has schoolwide SEL been implemented long enough to expect student-level outcomes?
• Have there been changes in student behavior and academic performance? How much? What kind?
• What evidence is there that teachers are using instructional methods that promote SEL? Is this a change from before?
• Is there evidence of change in the quality of the school’s climate?
• Is there evidence that schoolwide SEL is impacting relationships between the school and families?
• Are there SEL-related outcomes related to district, state, or national learning standards?

Identifying trends in data
• Do the data reveal any patterns?
• When reflecting on the data, was there anything that surprised you?
• Did the data confirm any of your expectations?

What factors may have contributed to these trends and changes?
• What factors or processes may have contributed to observed changes?
• Have there been enhancements to the school’s infrastructure for supporting SEL?
• What else may have affected the outcomes? Has other programming started? Where there any major changes in funding? What about pressure from the district for other activities?
• Are there any unusual findings that don’t seem to make sense?
• If the desired outcomes have not been achieved to the extent the SEL team hoped for, why might that be?

Sharing results with the school community

The results of the outcome data monitoring should be shared in a spirit of highlighting strengths and communicating what the priorities will be as schoolwide SEL moves forward. Communicating results in this way is meant to promote growth and improvement.

Sharing outcome data can be sensitive, especially since seeing significant results takes time. If a school’s journey toward schoolwide SEL is relatively new, it may be too early to expect student-level outcomes. Instead it may be more appropriate to focus on whether teachers and other staff are increasing their use of instructional strategies that promote SEL or to look at changes such as the implementation of new programs and schoolwide practices.

SEL teams can consult Tool 6.1: Learning from data as a team for guidance on setting ground rules for sharing outcome monitoring.

Revisit the cycle of inquiry and make data-informed adaptations

The cycle of inquiry continues as teams connect back to the cycle’s first activity – Where would we like to be? By revisiting this question the team can refine their efforts in light of what they learned from monitoring outcomes.

For example, the school community may want to update their vision for SEL. They may decide to re-evaluate the SMART SEL goals they set or even set new goals and benchmarks for the upcoming year. Revisiting the cycle could lead to new priorities, and that might call for an update to the implementation plan.

To keep the cycle of inquiry moving forward, the SEL team can consider the following questions:

• What should we start doing?
• What should we continue doing?
• What should we modify?
• What should we stop doing?
• What are our priorities for next year?
References


Tool 6.3: Learning from Data as a Team

Purpose

This resource provides guidance on how to facilitate a team-based process for reflecting on data, agreeing on what the results mean, and sharing the results with the school community.

How to use this tool

The SEL team can use this resource to develop their own approach for reflecting on data as a team and sharing what they learn with the school community. The approach suggested here is an ongoing, improvement-focused process that is structured, inclusive, and transparent. Although SEL teams may choose to accomplish this on their own, we offer suggestions for involving a broader group from the school community.

Team-based reflection process

When schools commit to learning from data using a cycle of inquiry approach, their process is ongoing and embedded into the school’s activities and routines over time. The process engages the school community in working together to make sense of the data and determine how it can be used to improve practice.\textsuperscript{10}

The team-based process described here includes:

- Bringing together additional school community members to reflect on the data
- Establishing ground rules for reflecting on the data
- Agreeing on how results will be shared with the school community

Bringing together additional school community members to reflect on the data

Members of the school community are an integral part of developing a common understanding about the data collected in a school. When they are active participants in team-based reflection they can help define and refine how the school promotes student success.

Involving school community members beyond the SEL team ensures that diverse perspectives and opinions will be honored and incorporated into the entire process. Consider inviting members from the following groups:

- The principal and other administrators with decision-making power
- Teachers
- Other school staff members who help support students
- Family members
- Student representatives
- School community members who have expertise in data collection, interpretation, and communication
Schools will differ in how they choose to involve these groups. The SEL team and the principal can determine what configuration will lead to the most meaningful conversations. Some schools might organize grade-level or subject-area teams. Others might create mixed groups of a variety of stakeholders.

**Establishing ground rules for reflecting on the data**

Developing ground rules establishes a foundation for how the team will engage in the process of looking at data and sharing it with others. The information they will discuss and interpret could be considered very sensitive since it often relates to student achievement, teacher performance, supportiveness of a school’s climate, or other important indicators of school improvement.

Before embarking on this collaborative endeavor, the SEL team can help the assembled group reach consensus on ground rules that will guide reflection and interpretation. The ground rules might relate to:

- How data will be used
- How to ensure a safe environment
- How to facilitate data reflection meetings

**Ground rules for how data will be used.** We recommend that the SEL team focus on nonpunitive use of data—using data to solve important issues rather than to allocate blame.\(^\text{11}\) This approach will encourage group members to look for solutions and new ways to promote student success.

Non-punitive use of data is encouraged since it helps orient group members to look for solutions and new ways to approach promoting student success. Alternatively, literature on organizational learning suggests that using data for confrontational purposes can be counterproductive because it leads to defensive reactions instead of learning.\(^\text{12}\)

**Ground rules to ensure a safe environment.** A safe learning environment is important since group members may need to set aside their official roles in the school, district, or the broader community to examine data deeply and openly. When they feel safe, they can make interpretations and offer views they might otherwise hesitate to express.

The SEL team can develop an initial list of the ground rules and then seek input from the larger group. Once ground rules for establishing a safe learning environment have been agreed upon, the SEL team can model them throughout the process.

Ground rules to consider include:

- All members of the group should have a chance to speak, express their own ideas and feelings freely, and pursue and complete their thoughts.
- It is not acceptable to interrupt another group member who is talking.
- All feedback is to be delivered respectfully regardless of whether it is positive, negative, or merely clarifying or correcting factual questions or errors.
- The discussion should not be dominated by any one person.
• When conflicting interpretations of data arise, the group will allow all members to state their point of view and the rationale behind it.
• Even in disagreement, there should be a collective understanding that the group is working together to promote success for all students. Arguments, while they may be spirited, must be based on the content of ideas and opinions, not on personalities.

**Ground rules for facilitating a data reflection meeting.** Data reflection meetings are likely to differ from more routine school meetings. We recommend that the facilitator observe the following behaviors.

• Views his/her role as asking open-ended questions and keeping the conversation moving by asking follow-up questions and presenting ideas for the group’s consideration.
• Avoids taking a position, suspends personal assumptions and judgments, is not attached to the outcome of the conversation, and is open to all options and comments.
• Encourages multiple points of view – and disagreement when appropriate – but helps the group draw creatively upon the diverse perspectives of its membership.
• Is directive during times when reframing or refocusing is needed to keep conversations on topic.
• Does not let individuals dominate the conversation – including the facilitator herself/himself.
• Summarizes and clarifies important points, disagreements, and next steps.

**Agreeing on how results will be shared with the school community**

The next step following a data reflection meeting is to summarize and organize the findings so they are accessible to the rest of the school community. One possibility is to create simple charts and graphs accompanied by a brief overview of patterns and trends in the data. These reports could be tailored to different audiences such as principals and other administrators, teachers, or families.

Whatever the format, a summary of the group’s interpretations would include themes related to key factors for improving instruction, achievement, school climate, or teacher performance. Team members also need to be aware of the sensitive nature of this type of information and mindful about how it will be perceived by others who were not involved in the data reflection process.

To minimize any negative consequences of sharing data, consider some of the following guidelines around preparing the findings before sharing them:

• Establish a “no surprises” policy by presenting preliminary findings to the school’s leaders and key members of the school community to obtain feedback before finalizing write-ups and presentations for the broader school community.\(^{13}\)
• After sharing preliminary findings with this smaller group, bring their input back to the SEL team to incorporate their feedback into a revised draft.
• Reconvene to decide if the information is ready to share across the school community.
References


